IN DEWISLAND

BY

S. BARING GOULD

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Xmas 1906.

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IN DEWISLAND

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

MEHALAH
IN THE ROAR OF THE SEA
THE QUEEN OF LOVE
CHEAP JACK ZITA
MRS. CURGENVEN OF CURGENVEN
ARMINELL
JACQUETTA
URITH
KITTY ALONE
MARGERY OF QUETHER
NOEMI
THE BROOM-SQUIRE
DARTMOOR IDYLLS
GUAVAS THE TINNER
THE PENNYCOMEQUICKS
BLADYS
DOMITIA
PABO THE PRIEST
WINEFRED
ROYAL GEORGIE
MISS QUILLET
CHRIS OF ALL-SORTS

IN DEWISLAND

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S. BARING-GOULD

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IN DEWISLAND

CHAPTER I

A NOVEMBER afternoon, when light is dull and nature despondent. And nowhere so desolate at this season of negatives as in Dewisland, the great promontory of South Wales, that is thrust into the ocean, over against Waterford, exposed to every gale, with the sea roaring around it, dashing itself into foam against the Cambrian rocks of episcopal purple hue, and the sky bending sullenly over it with a scowl.

A November afternoon, the heavens overcast with formless vapours, through which the finger of God has not been thrust to divide the light from the darkness, and to separate the vague canopy into shapely cloud.

The wind sobbed over the treeless waste, piping about the stone walls, hissing in the sea-bent of the sand-dunes, so charged with

infinitesimal particles of spray that it glazed the face exposed to it with salt, and blurred with saline crystals every pane on the sea side of every house. The distant sea muttered and broke into roars as if it were a hoary sinner, dying with paralysed tongue, endeavouring to make confession of his misdeeds, failing to render himself comprehensible, and raging because his words were inarticulate.

On this afternoon John Evans and his half-brother David Narberth were driving along a rough road in a little tax-cart.

John—Shôn or Shone, as he was usually called—was the younger by several years.

He was the son of a well-to-do farmer occupying his own land at Rhoson. Old John Evans had married a widow without private means, and encumbered with a son—David.

"I am a lucky fellow—am I not, Davie?" asked the younger, who was driving.

"I never doubted it from the moment you were born," replied his half-brother.

"Oh! I do not mean because I am father's son and heir—never so fortunate as now."

"As how?"

"Having secured the finest girl in the country; you do not know one better favoured, do you, Davie, go where you will?"

The young fellow addressed made no reply.

"What say you, old man?" persisted John.

"You are certainly blessed with good fortune. She will be well off. There are many acres in Ty Gwyn."

"Yes, there are," said John; "and, dear old boy, when I am married, and when, in the course of nature, father departs—why, you shall be my hind there. Will that please you, Davie?"

"Yes, Shone."

"Why don't you also marry?"

The elder laughed, but there was no mirth in his merriment. "How can I, Shone, when I make nothing but wooden spoons, and not enough of them to buy the broth wherewith to maintain a wife?"

"Oh, as to that—don't fear."

"But there is another hindrance. Who would have such a one as I? God made me, and I say nothing against Him for it. But he made me such that no girl would care to have me."

John made no attempt to controvert this, save by saying, "Ah! Davie, no girl who knew your good heart and bright genius would give a thought to your legs. I suppose you have never fancied any pretty wench, have you?"

"It is of no use crying for the moon, Shone."

"One cannot help oneself in the matter of love," observed John sententiously. "On a still, starry night, when all sleeps, suddenly there rises a rushing wind, with lightning flaming; and so it is with us. When we least expect it, with a rush and a flare—love comes."

"Did it come on you, Shone, with a rush and a flare?"

"I cannot say that. Father had thought of the arrangement, and so had Mrs. Bowen, and the old people put their heads together, threw Dinah and me together, gave us a touch, and away we went, slid into love, hand in hand."

"But it has come—with a flare?"

"Of course, how could it be otherwise? Dinah is uncommonly good-looking. What eyes she has! But you have shirked answering my question. Come, answer me. Have you ever seen in all Dewisland—in all Pembrokeshire a handsomer girl?"

"I have not travelled much."

"Then, say—in St. David's."

"She is certainly very handsome, with her splendid hair and eyes."

"But do you know one you admire more?"

"Oh, Shone! I have eyes only for the wood out of which I make spoons. I compare

this bit of wood with that—but not one girl with another. The wood I can take to myself and fashion as it pleases me—but a girl—no!"

"You do more than make spoons out of beech-wood," said the younger; "you have been trapping foxes and curing the skins. What do you propose doing with them? If you had been in any other part of England or Wales, except this where no gentleman hunts, you would be looked upon as worse than a murderer. Are you going to make a coat of them, Davie?"

"I have already turned them to purpose."

"To what?"

David did not reply.

"You are slow with your answer," said his half-brother; "what have you done with the skins?"

"Well, Shone, if you must know, I have given them to Sheena Lewis, to be made into a jacket."

"Sheena Lewis!" exclaimed John Evans, and dropped the reins; "what in heaven or earth can have made you do that?"

"The weather is cold, and she has to trudge the country in winter. They are very poor—she and her grandmother."

"But they are Irish."

"The grandmother is, but Sheena's father was Welsh."

"He is dead. He ought to have known better than to marry an Irish girl. I do not like them."

"Do you know Sheena Lewis?"

"Hardly; I have no desire to do so. Though her father was Welsh there is wild Irish blood in the girl. Put a drop of ink into a glass of wine, and you can neither drink nor write with the compound."

"I owe Mrs. O'Grady and Sheena Lewis something. Joe Lewis gave me the violin; and as father will not allow me to play at Rhoson, I go to the cottage when I wish to practise."

They had reached a dip in the road where a stream gurgled at the side, and the way led directly to the shore on which the surf formed a series of white broad flounces. On the left rose sand-hills overgrown with coarse grass and a creeping rose, the latter now dead and brown. On the right were walled enclosures on a steep slope, rising to the crags of Carn Llidi.

There were white houses dotted about sparsely, white not only as to their walls, but with their roofs lime-washed as well.

"I shall descend here," said John. "You

need not think of driving up the lane and dancing the cart over cobbles and down into ruts; wait for me here. Bad for you that you did not make for yourself an overcoat of the fox-skins instead of giving them to that Irish beggar."

"Sheena is no beggar," retorted David. "And I am warmer at heart thinking that she wears it over her thin dress, than I should be with it about my shoulders."

"I shall not detain you half an hour," said John.

John Evans swung himself out of the trap. He was a tall, well-built young man, with an intelligent face lighted with a frank expression.

A gate gave access to the lane leading to Ty Gwyn. This he threw open, and passed on his way.

Then his half-brother slowly descended from the cart, and revealed the cause of the disparaging remarks he had passed on himself. All the upper portion of his body was justly proportioned, but his legs were grotesquely short. His arms were long and sinewy, and his shoulders broad. His neck was short. Although his face was not favoured by nature, for the features were rugged, yet it was

pleasant, on account of the clear, kindly eyes.

He hitched the reins about one of the gate-posts, and proceeded to remove a green baize case from under the seat. This he opened and took a violin from it.

Seating himself under a stone wall, that sheltered him from the wind, he tuned the instrument.

The horse, covered with its winter coat of shaggy chestnut hair, was indifferent to the cold. It sniffed at the grass by the roadside, and ripped away such herbage as it could eat. The wind was from the north-west, and drove the rising tide upon the cliffs of St. David's Head.

The waves swept frothing round the point, to reel in chopped, tumultuous heaps on the further side. Gulls, uttering their plaintive screams, wheeled overhead; sheep bleated in the lee of the walls.

David Narberth heard none of the sounds of nature, intent only on his instrument. Presently he looked up, placed his violin in position, and lightly drew the bow across the strings; for a while he groped among the chords, rambling from one strain to another, as seeking a deep current of melody among scattered threads of music.

Then he struck on "Ar hyd y nos!"[1]

"Sweet the tale of minstrel merry,
Ar hyd y nos!
Sweet the rest of herdsman weary,
Ar hyd y nos!
And to hearts oppressed with sorrow,
Forced the mask of mirth to borrow,
Comfort comes until the morrow,
Ar hyd y nos!"

As he played the air—one of the loveliest of the national Welsh melodies—his rugged features relaxed, and softness and melancholy stole over them. The eye became abstracted, looking beyond the fretting sea and the drifting air before he passed beyond it to variations and vapours; and twice he went through the simple musical phantasies of the soul, that formed and dispersed, that broke and reshaped; and then he returned to the fair theme again, "Ar hyd y nos!" The horizon had widened, the cloud canopy had lifted. The wind no longer moaned, a golden haze enveloped the player. Beyond the sea-marge rose phantom hills against a mysterious glow, Hy Brasil, the Isles of the Blessed. The gulls no longer shrieked; larks soared and sang. The dead dry grass was no longer lifeless, but was flushed with sap

[1] "The livelong night."

and twinkled with brilliants. The turf was starred with flowers. A breath passed over the Towyn, the sand-dunes; the trailing roses that had been leafless put forth their pale yellow flowers, and the thrift waved in pink satin sheets. The savour of dead vegetation, of decaying seaweed, was not now on the breath of the wind; it was fragrant, as wafting over a bed of lilies. Ar hyd y nos!

There was now no winter in that troubled soul. It had passed beyond the world of hard realities into the realm of the ideal. It was no longer held down to earth by a clumsy, ill-shapen body; it soared on angel's wings in a firmament where the spheres move in harmony, to which reaches no sharp pang, but which is pervaded by dreamy ecstasy.

The day was closing in. The wind was raw and biting, but there was no darkness in that uplifted spirit, no chill numbed its wings. How long time passed, that Davie did not know; he was in a world where time was not, save as articulated by the throb of the strings and the measure of the music.

A dog barked furiously at Ty Gwyn. It was the hound kept chained there. The brute had not become reconciled to Shone Evans, and

saluted him as an intruder whenever he approached.

Davie heard the barking, and paused for a moment. "Why does Tarw not like him?" asked he. "Everyone loves Shone. He never hurt man or beast. There are few men in the world like Shone. And if Dinah Bowen be not in love with him—she is worse than a fool."

Then, once more, Davie put his violin into position, and in the next moment was above the clouds.

The dog is the friend of man, and, when human companionship fails, remains fast and fond. But of inanimate objects only the violin can become the friend, growing close to the heart. But is it inanimate? Does not the human soul overflow into it and thrill with its chords? It responds to his varying humours —it laughs with his joys, it weeps with his sorrows. It is a confidant to which he opens his inmost thoughts. It comforts and cheers him when most cast down. The piano and the organ are but mechanical toys compared with the violin. In the latter nothing intervenes between the digit and the vibrant string. It is more eloquent than the human voice. It utters what man shrinks from speaking.

Suddenly sounded hard by a clear female voice :

"Sweet the tale of minstrel merry,
Ar hyd y nos!
Sweet the rest of herdsman weary,
Ar hyd y nos!
And to hearts oppressed with sorrow,
Forced the mask of mirth to borrow,
Comfort comes until the morrow,
Ar hyd y nos!"

CHAPTER II

A STARTLED look came over Davie's face, one almost of alarm, as he heard the voice, and a twinge as of pain. He let down his instrument and rose to his feet.

Before him stood a girl, slender, lithe, with dark hair and eyes, which along with her lips were smiling. The face was oval, chin and mouth finely formed, and the complexion slightly sallow.

"Sheena!" exclaimed Davie.

"Why, David, what brings you here?"

"I have come along with my brother, who has gone up to Ty Gwyn, and I am waiting his return."

"He is there now?"

"To be sure. I expect him back every moment."

"See, Davie!" said the girl, showing a fur jacket lined with some cheap material. "See what I have done with your fox-skins. I can brave the worst weather and the sharpest cold in this; and at night grandmother and I throw

it over the foot of the bed, and our feet are as hot as baked apples."

"It glads me that you find comfort in the skins."

"You see," said the girl, as she unbuttoned the pelisse, "I have made it all myself, and the buttons were from an old coat that had been my father's. Granny had saved them all these many years—no such buttons could be got now at Haverford for any money, and there was but one short. I could have done with six, but the five suffice."

"And why are you going to the Bowens'? It is late for needlework, for the day is closing in."

"I could go at no other time. I left my work an hour before time, so as to reach Ty Gwyn before the fall of night."

"Why should you go to Ty Gwyn at all?"

"I am obliged to do so. Nathan Groes obliges me."

"What has Nathan to do with you?"

"He has annoyed me greatly of late. He waylays me—I have to make a round to escape from him. He gives me no peace, and yesterday he behaved so roughly that there is nothing left for me but to complain to his mistress."

"You should have told me of this, Sheena, and I would have stopped his impertinence."

"No, Davie. This must be knocked out between him and me and Mrs. Bowen. None must interfere but such as have a right."

"Can you trust Mrs. Bowen to do this?"

"They say she is a strict and God-fearing woman. And one woman will stand by another."

"The women have not stood much by you so far."

"But in such a matter she will. I would not complain now had not his behaviour become unendurable. He leaves me no peace; I have been insulted."

"Insulted, Sheena!" The young man rose and clenched his hands, and the expression of his face changed. The veins swelled on his brow.

"There!" exclaimed the girl. "Be quiet, Davie, and let me manage my own business. On no account must you be mixed up with the matter; I will go on my way at once and see Mrs. Bowen. Your brother will be leaving shortly?"

"You will pass him in the lane. He has been away, I suppose, half an hour."

He threw open the gate for her and let her go through.

Then he reseated himself, and placed the violin on his knees. The desire to play had gone from him.

Sheena began the rugged ascent, but had to be careful; in the gathering darkness the inequalities were not obvious.

She had not reached half the distance to the house when she saw a man descending towards her, but she paid no heed to him, assuming that he was John Evans, returning from his visit to the farm, and her eyes were engaged in looking for boulders and avoiding ruts.

As the man drew near, she stepped on one side to suffer him to pass, and did not raise her eyes, when she was caught by the arm, and a mocking voice exclaimed: "What! My little Sheena! come to return my visit?"

The girl resisted, but could not disengage herself from the grip.

"Heigh!" he exclaimed, "what have we here? A fur coat? We are in luck's way. When did you procure this?"

"Nathan, allow me to pass. As to the coat —I made it."

"But whence came the fur? Come, little sweetheart—a kiss for a toll."

"Let me go by."

"I will not. You have come here to see me. I know the ways of you demure wenches —sly when darkness fails to cover your blushes."

"Let me pass; I have not come to see you.

I am on my way to ask your mistress to protect me from your rudeness."

"Oh, is that it?"

"Yes, I am alone in the world but for my grandmother—and must protect myself."

"You shall not go by. You are in my power."

"Not so; I have but to cry out, and help is at hand."

"Whence? In the house none will hear. There is Shone Evans paying court to Dinah, and he is too occupied to have ears for your squeals."

"There is someone in the road."

"Who?"

"David Narberth with the cart."

"That cripple! He must attend to the horse."

"I will pass."

"You shall not go on to stir up my mistress against me, and perhaps have me driven away."

The girl snatched at a stone from the wall. The walls of the fields were of stones unset in mortar. With the stone she struck at the knuckles of the man who held her. With a curse he let go, but he still blocked her way.

"You Irish wild-cat!" he exclaimed. "Do

you suppose that I am fool enough to suffer you to carry an evil report of me to the Bowens?"

"I must do so. I have no choice. By no other means can I free myself from your persecution."

"Be reasonable, Sheena. I love you, none but you, and mine you shall be, I swear."

"Irish you call me," said she. "At least I know whence I am, and none can tell whence you come. Let Mrs. Bowen protect me, as no one else will."

He stood looking at her for a moment, irresolute. He wore a broad-brimmed hat, and she could not see his eyes. He was a tall, strong man, and wiry.

"Sheena," said he, "do not drive me desperate. Be friends with me, or you make me your deadly foe."

"I am and will be your foe, coward!"

"Why do you say this? There is someone stands in my way. Who is it? Answer me this."

"There is no one."

"A lie. You love a man."

"So help me Heaven, none. But I can hate and despise—and that I do you."

"Very well. Take the consequences. You shall not go near the door of Ty Gwyn, and if

you scream out, it will not be to call someone to your aid against me."

He turned sharply about and left her.

Surprised at his abrupt and hasty retreat, she paused for a moment to recover breath and still the bounding of her heart. She heard the clatter of his feet as he ran up the lane.

A moment later, and she heard the baying of a dog.

He had unchained Tarw, and the beast came tearing down the lane towards her.

With an exclamation of terror, Sheena escaped to the top of the wall, as the brute dashed up towards her. Sniffing the fox-skins, he was inflamed with the madness of sport. He leaped at her as she attempted to escape, and tore at the fur and became more wild than before.

She uttered a cry now: "Oh, save me! save me! He will tear me!"

The brute was a huge, heavy, spotted hound, with fierce red eyes. For a while he was overawed by the stone Sheena held and with which she menaced him. But next moment he leaped to the summit of the wall and confronted her, barking furiously, and threatening her with his fangs.

She had difficulty in maintaining her position; the wall was loosely compacted of un-

shaped blocks. As she stepped back before the advancing beast, the stones gave way under her feet, and she was forced to leap down into the field that lay at a higher level than the lane, this latter furrowed deep in soil and rock by centuries of traffic.

On alighting upon the turf, losing nerve, Sheena turned to fly, and at once Tarw bounded in pursuit.

Hearing him sniffing at her heels, she turned again, and assuming a bold front, menaced him with the stone she still carried. He snarled and shrank from leaping at her throat.

So facing him she backed, step by step, towards the wall once more where it was higher, and whence she could pull missiles to hurl at her assailant.

As she retreated the brute advanced, and at intervals threatened a rush. However, she succeeded in reaching the protection she desired, and now was able to fling stones at the dog; but she was too greatly frightened to take aim, and they fell without striking him. She dared not turn her back to get hold with both hands of a heavy block, but scrabbled with both at the summit, pulling towards her such as she could easily raise.

Again piteously she cried for help.

In place of assistance came two other

assailants, a sheep-dog and a terrier from a neighbouring farm, attracted by the barking of Tarw, and well aware from the note that there was sport in prospect. By a supreme effort the girl managed to scramble to the top of the wall, but could effect it only after having been successful in hitting the hound with a stone on the paw, that made him howl with pain, and limp.

She could not expect to maintain herself for long in her new position, as the summit was as accessible to the brutes that raged against her as to herself.

But now, at length, the imprecated help arrived, simultaneously from both sides.

Davie, hurrying up the lane, bounded over the wall, and rushed upon Tarw, as his brother, descending from Ty Gwyn at a run, drawn by the cries, reached the spot where stood Sheena, silhouetted against the sky.

"Shone, leave me to settle Tarw!" shouted David. "Save her! Save her first; take her to the cart."

John Evans had wrenched a stake from one of the gates as he passed, and now, standing at a much lower level than Sheena, he called up to her, "Jump! girl! jump! I will catch you." Instantly she sprang; then he caught her with his left arm, and she clung about his neck, convulsed with a storm of sobs.

The sheep-dog and the terrier assaulted him, and he kicked the latter on the jaws, and made it reel back, and lose taste for further conflict. Against the other beast he whirled the stake.

"Hold to me fast," said John; "I must not let you drop, and I can grip with one arm only. The brute is savage."

A stroke aimed at the dog missed, and next moment the creature had leaped and set its teeth in the fur jacket of the girl. She uttered a piercing cry, and her arms clasped John the tighter.

Shone tossed his cudgel in the air and caught it short, and so drove the end into the face of the beast, and with such effect as to force it back, with an eye injured.

"Davie," shouted John, "can you manage that devil Tarw?"

"Yes, yes! Carry her down, and then come back to me."

David had sprung from the rear at the hound as it was engaged on Sheena, and had caught it by the collar. Long of arm, he was immensely muscular, and he wrenched and twisted at the collar in an attempt to throttle the dog.

Tarw raged, tossed, leaped, fell, rose, without dragging David from his feet. His short legs were now of service to him.

But the hound was a powerful brute, and it taxed all the strength of David to hold him. The combatants swayed and shook, reeled and swung up and down, but David never suffered the dog to turn its head about towards him so as to bite. As his hand was thrust through the broad leather collar he was master, and this he twisted, and the brute lost breath.

In one of the struggles Tarw fell over on his side, and then with an exultant shout David sprang upon him, and trampled on his flank with his big feet, without relaxing hold of the collar, pounding into the palpitating body with his heels till he heard the ribs crack.

Meanwhile John had carried the girl down the lane. He could descend with caution only on account of the inequalities of its floor. Her bosom was heaving wildly, her sobs came spasmodically. She clung desperately to her deliverer, in the swirl of her brain not regarding who he was. No word did she utter, for the power to speak was gone from her, delirious with terror and unable to realise that the height of the danger was overpassed. As John bore her, her cheek was against his own, and the tears that streamed over it flowed upon his cheek also. Her warm breath fanned him, and her fingers clutched his neck ; in her nervous terror she almost strangled him.

Putting the second arm about her, he was now able with ease to support her; the two dogs badly handled had withdrawn.

She was no great weight, a slim, light, lithe figure. John was, however, obliged to hold her tightly to him, so full of stumbling-blocks was the way; and as he did so he felt her heart beat against his own. To the measured stroke of his pulses came the rapid double throb of her heart, like a duplicated echo to a blacksmith's blows on the anvil. Strange was it that, before John had reached the cart, the two pulses beat together—not that hers had slackened pace, but that his had quickened. Now he threw open the gate.

The horse stood where it had been left, going over the grass within reach with questioning and disdainful snuffles.

"There! get into the cart. I must go and help my brother."

Sheena was, however, too dazed to understand him. He was compelled to lift her into the conveyance; and when there, she sank on her knees, laid her head on the seat, clung to the rail, shivering and sobbing.

"Stay there, little girl," he said gently; "no harm will now come to you. I shall return immediately when I have seen how Davie fares with Tarw."

Then he left her and reascended the lane; on reaching the spot where the struggle had taken place he threw himself over the wall. Then he saw his half-brother standing in the field, trembling and gasping from the exertions he had made; at his feet lay the dog, an inert mass, with lolling tongue, the life trampled out of it.

CHAPTER III

"JUMP up and drive," said John Evans to his half-brother. "We must put the girl between us."

David obeyed without a word, and when he held the reins, John also mounted. There was not room for three persons on the seat, but Sheena did not require much space, and David sat on the edge of the cart.

John put his arm about the girl to sustain her, as she had not recovered from the fright and struggle she had undergone.

The horse, nothing loth to move without the application of the whip, started on its way home.

John, holding Sheena to his side, felt how she shook as if severely chilled. Every now and then a sob resolved itself into a long-drawn sigh. She was still unable to speak, though she moved her lips in the attempt to say something.

Neither of the brothers said aught as the horse ascended the long hill to the Towyn,

the stretch of sand-hills that are supposed to cover the Roman city of Ad Menapiam.

Holding her fast, John could feel her heart still beating tumultuously against his side. Her hair had broken loose in her battle with the dog, and the sea wind drifted it across his face, and once, as the wheel jolted over a stone, her head rested on his shoulder and her breath played over his face.

The night had closed in, but there was light enough for the driver to distinguish the road.

At one point of it the horse manifested a strong objection to being driven in the direction in which urged by David.

"Why, Davie," exclaimed John, "you are going wrong!"

"I must drive her home."

"Ah! to be sure, but where to?"

"To the Waun fawr. This is Sheena Lewis."

"Sheena Lewis!" echoed John, and relaxed his hold of the girl. Then, after a pause he said, "I might have guessed as much from the skin coat she wears, but I had not thought of it."

"Mad fool that I was," murmured Davie, "not to consider that there was danger attached to the fox-hides. I am not clever. Not like you, Shone."

"My dear Davie, who would have expected that the brute Tarw would be unchained?"

Then the girl made an effort, and said: "I thank you both, sirs. I should have been torn to shreds by those dogs had you not come to my aid. And, oh, what would poor grandmother have done!"

"It would have been poor you," said John good-humouredly, "scattered in bits over the field and mumbled by dogs."

"But my grandmother could not live without me. She cannot earn enough to keep herself."

"Are you better now?" asked John.

"Oh, yes—much."

"But you are trembling still."

"It is the terror that has not left me. My head goes round."

"Then I must continue to hold you," said John Evans.

Thereafter all once more relapsed into silence.

It was broken at length by John, who had been considering.

"That dog," said he, "was chained up when I went to the door at Ty Gwyn. Someone must have loosed him."

"It was——" Sheena began, but checked herself.

"And then," pursued John, "when I heard the cries for help and the baying of Tarw, I ran down the lane, and jostled against Nathan Groes, who was also descending, I suppose to give assistance; for he must have heard as well as myself, but I thrust past him, and he, instead of following, jumped the hedge and disappeared. It was strange."

"Sheena," said David, turning his head, "did Nathan speak with you on your way up to Ty Gwyn? I heard voices, and I thought I distinguished his."

She did not answer, and he repeated the question.

"I knew he had annoyed you—and but that the words ceased I should have gone to you then."

"Yes—Nathan was there."

"Did he know why you were going to Ty Gwyn?"

"Yes—I told him."

"I shall have something to say to Nathan," said David decisively.

"I pray you do not," urged the girl; "as I said before, you must not intermeddle between him and me."

"What, little girl, is this?" asked John; but before an answer came, David drew rein, and said, "Here we are at the cottage."

"Remain in the cart," ordered John. "I will see the girl into her home, and explain matters to her grandmother, who might be frightened. How comes this, that there is no light?"

John thrust open the cottage door, when a voice from behind called, "It's soon you're back indeed, Janie."

"I am here, granny," replied Sheena, "and here are Mr. John Evans and Davie Narberth. He is outside with the horse. They have been very good to me, saving me from a big dog that attacked me."

"God bless the gintlemen entirely," said a voice, "for showing kindness to a poor orphan girl; 'Cead mile failthe.'"

"Mother O'Grady," said John, "you must strike a light, that we may see whether your granddaughter be hurt or not. The brute flew at her before we were able to reach her."

"Is it a light, then, you'd have? Sure, I'll have one directly," responded the old woman, as she groped for a tinder-box.

After much shuffling and many questionings of herself as to where it might be, she found the box, and the click of steel on the flint was heard and the sparks flew about.

"You have no fire," said John. "It is cold enough to warrant one."

"And so it is, bedad, but fuel is scarce, and the more turves we burn, the less we shall have for the winter before us."

Presently the tinder ignited, and then a sulphurous match flared and was applied to a tallow dip.

"The light is not of the best," said John, "but hold it here as I pull off the jacket."

The fox-skin habit was removed and the garment beneath exposed, and fresh blood was visible on the sleeve.

"She has been bitten!" exclaimed John.

"Och hone!" cried the old woman; "and the dog was mad, you say?"

"I said nothing of the kind."

"But it's just mad it was to bite her."

"He was savage, that is all, at the smell of the fox-skins."

"But savage dogs run mad, and then, och! Sure I'll take Sheen down to Dowrog Pool, and if she starts away she's got it, and 'twill be smothering her they will be under a feather bed."

"You need not alarm yourself about that as yet," said John. "Pray hold the candle nearer, that I may look at the girl's arm."

"Sorrow a bit nearer can I hold it without setting her on fire. The foinest thing I knew is what did Tim Nelligan when he was bit.

He just went round, and himself wid his teeth bit off the dog's tail that had bit him; and so returned the madness to the baste as gave it him."

John turned up Sheena's torn sleeve and exposed her arm.

"Are you hurt elsewhere?" he asked.

The girl shook her head.

"Fetch me some water—she will faint," commanded John Evans.

"Aragh! it's just the naming of the water has done it," said the old woman. "Tim Nelligan, tho' he never went raving mad, after he was bit never would abide the smell of water, but drank his spirits nate. When he got knocked on the head in a bit o' a scramble, and was took to the hospital, they put him in a bath, and he died right away. It was the water he couldn't stand, the touch on his head would not ha' hurt him."

"Well, well, fetch me warm water immediately. The place where she has been bitten must be washed at once. The brute's teeth passed through the fur and the cotton sleeve."

"Divil a dhrop o' warm water can I get you when I ha'n't had a fire these six hours."

"Then light one immediately."

"Turves are scarce," said the old woman. "We may live on the Waun, but the farmers

don't allow me any roights to take the peat off it."

Whilst the grandmother was engaged in kindling a fire, John brought a bowl he had found, filled it with cold water, and taking soap, made Sheena hold her bare arm over the basin. He kept the limb stretched by grasping her fingers in his left hand, and thus proceeded to cleanse the wound.

The arm was beautifully shaped and ivory-white, save where the fangs of Tarw had bruised and torn the skin.

As the cold water and the soap stung the wound Sheena's fingers involuntarily contracted on Shone's hand, and she gave vent to a gasp of pain.

Having lighted the fire on the hearth, the old woman drew near to her granddaughter.

"There, honey, and didn't I say you shouldn't have gone to Ty Gwyn? Where was the use of complaining of that gossoon Nathan? He's bad, and we all know it."

"What had you to complain about that concerned Nathan?" asked John.

The girl glanced quickly at her grandmother, but Mrs. O'Grady was not one to be deterred by a look from speaking what was on her mind.

"It's a deal o' throuble and vexation that

Nathan has caused her," said she, "persecuting her wid his attentions. And at last, as there was no putting him off, Sheena said she'd go and speak wid Mistress Bowen about him, and now she's come by him on her way, acushla!"

"Nathan bears a bad character," said John.

"It's that I know, and for that I didn't like his coming after my Sheena. There's no saying what folk might have talked. I have a better way than that, to write his name on a pebble and dhrop it into Non's well with an *ave* said backwards, and that would have given him the lumbago so bad he wouldn't ha' throubled her more all the winter."

Suddenly the girl's hand clutched that of John convulsively; she reeled, and had he not started forward and caught her she would have fallen to the floor.

He carried her gently to a chair, placed her in it and bathed her temples with cold water. Then, remembering something, he ran to the door, where David was patiently waiting. "Davie," said he, "drive as quickly as you can into the town and get a drop of brandy, and—I believe they have not sufficient food in the house. Take my purse and get them meat—anything you think of that they may want. The girl has fainted."

"Oh, Shone! you are a grand man!" ex-

claimed his admiring brother. "I always thought it, said it, but I never was so sure of it as I am now."

Then he laid the whip to the horse and drove away. John returned within and took the light from the hand of the old woman, and held it aloft above the girl's face. What a face that was, white now as wax, and with dark rings about the eyes! How beautifully chiselled were the features! Those lips of that delicate mouth had almost touched him. The great eyes that looked so solemnly at him had rained tears that had streamed over his cheek.

The girl's bosom was heaving. It had been pressed to his own. His heart had beat in rhythm with hers. The long white arms, one of which was bare and rested on her lap, had been about his neck. The hand had been clasped in his, and the fingers had pressed his own. A strange tumult was in the heart and soul of John, like the tossing and conflicting heaps of waves when a sudden blast descends upon the deep.

A faint colour rose into Sheena's cheeks, as she saw his eyes fixed intently on her.

The fire had blazed up among the twigs placed with the turf, and it filled the chamber with a golden glow. The candle now added

no light, it was but a speck in the blaze. John hastily put it down, his hand was shaking, and the tallow had swaled over his fingers.

"Glory be to God! honey, you'll be right enough soon, and I'll make ye a cup of tay. What'll the gintleman think of you making such a moil over a drap o' blood? It's tears streaming down both sides o' her face. I've seen your grandfather after a fine fight, and I never turned a hair."

She did not attend to her grandmother. Her eyes, as they recovered light, were fixed on those of John Evans. He stood before her as in a dream, and she remained still and hardly breathed. If Tarw had burst in at the door barking, they would not have heard his notes. A strange, mysterious, sudden coupling of two human souls took place. What the music of his violin had been to Davie, that was wrought in a moment in them. A trance, an ecstasy, a revelation.

Was it for a moment? Was it for more? Only the grandmother might have noted the transit of time, and she was engaged on the teapot, and observed nothing.

In a quarter of an hour Davie returned, and when he drew up at the cottage door he shouted. John ran out, and returned with what had been purchased. He at once mixed

hot water with some brandy, for the kettle was now singing pleasantly, and insisted on Sheena taking it. His hand shook as he offered the glass, hers shook as she received it. She did not raise her eyes again, they remained lowered.

Then he gave a slab of beefsteak to Mrs. O'Grady and bade her cook enough for supper. Sheena must be fed up, he said; she had received a nervous shock that had broken her down. He would call and inquire next day. He spoke shortly and nervously. A dew had broken out on his brow.

"Put on fuel," said he; "pile up the turves, do not stint. I will send over a cartload of peat and kindling wood to-morrow."

As he drove home to Rhoson with his half-brother, both remained without speaking for the greater part of the way.

Presently David said: "I am sorry, Shone, that you think ill of Sheena, because she is partly Irish. It is no fault of hers."

"Irish!" repeated John, "what did I say of the Irish? Bah! we have old Owen's book of the *History of Pembrokeshire* at home, and I read in it that the Irish once swarmed in Dewisland, and I doubt not we are as much Irish as we are Welsh—without suspecting it."

CHAPTER IV

WHEN Nathan saw the half-brothers drive off, he walked into the farmhouse at Ty Gwyn with a firm step and confident air, such as would have better become a master than a servant. He was aware that Mrs. Bowen was not within. She had gone to chapel. Nathan entered the parlour where Dinah was seated by the fire, brooding in thought, with her hands on her knees.

As he came in, she looked up hastily, with a troubled expression on her countenance, then looked down again.

Dinah was distinctly a handsome girl, with abundant and glossy dark hair, a full face and brilliant complexion. The lips were red and ripe. The brow was heavy over dark eyes, in which burned the fires of fierce passions.

"Well, Dinah," said Nathan, "you have seen the last of Tarw."

"What do you mean?"

"Those two fellows have beat the life out of the beast, and have trodden him flat."

"What two fellows?"

"John Evans and his deformed brother."

"The dog was chained up. It could do no harm."

"I let him loose."

"Why so?"

"I do not care to have John Evans coming here."

She looked up at Nathan with appeal in her eyes. "What can I do?" she asked.

"I have packed him off with a flea in his ear. You should have seen him run. It was the dwarf and not John who killed the dog. John showed only his heels."

"That is not true. He is no coward."

"Believe me or not, as you like, it is all one with me. But I will not have Shone Evans here."

"You cannot keep him away. You unloosed Tarw, and have failed."

"Cannot keep him away!" laughed Nathan. "I can keep any man away. I have but to whisper to the sparrows, so as to have my secret and yours twittered throughout the land. Do you suppose I have not kept every scrap of paper with your love messages to me, that you thrust into the hole of the rock where I could find them? What if I were to spread these before the eyes of your dandy suitor? Would he come here again?"

Nathan leisurely took a seat over against the girl. He removed his hat. He was a dark, handsome man, with black, hard eyes, a dusky complexion, and whiskers and head of hair sable as ink.

"I wish I were dead!" exclaimed the girl passionately.

"You would prefer to be married, but I can forbid the banns if I choose, and you shall take no one but me, except on my own conditions."

"What are they?"

Dinah turned with a sullen countenance upon him.

"I will not allow myself to be trifled with, and then, when it suits you, thrust aside to make way for another. It was not I who ventured to look up to you and make advances. It was you who came down to me and entangled me with your witchery. And now—you would snap all the threads that hold me and send me into an outhouse, tread over me on your way to church. It shall not be."

"Oh, Nathan, be considerate! Mother never would consent to my taking you."

"Then why did you ogle me and draw me on?"

She was silent, and pouted with her red lips.

"If Shone Evans marries you, Dinah, then you will go with him to Rhoson, and I suppose

that the misshapen brother will be sent here. Then—where shall I be?"

"Oh, Nathan, I will speak for you!"

"I want action, not speech. I will not wait till you are married. I will have all determined and sure before, or else——"

"Oh, do not, do not, Nathan!"

"I must look after myself. You are taking care of yourself when you choose a well-to-do yeoman's son. What does he want with Ty Gwyn when he has, or will have, Rhoson? Dinah, you should have thought of what might be before you encouraged me — before you threw yourself into my arms."

"Nathan, you are cruel."

"No, I do not desire to hurt you. It was very good of you to love the poor serving-man. I am grateful. But I must secure my own future. I make conditions."

"Well, name them."

She turned half about, and looked with downcast eyes at the embers on the hearth, and her fingers twitched nervously on her lap.

"I must have the cottage above the yard, and three or four fields on that side, let to me at a nominal rent of a crown for fourteen years. I will take no less. I consider myself a model of moderation in making so slight a demand."

"Nat!" gasped Dinah, and turned the chair about, and stared at him, "it is not mine to give. The farm belongs to my mother."

"I leave you to settle matters with her. It is your affair. You are to marry, and if I allow you to do so—I must be paid."

"I cannot, I dare not speak to my mother."

"As you will—then I let all the world know what our relations have been. I will show all those little loving scrawls of yours at the Grove or the Cross Inn. Very interesting reading for the young topers there! And then what tales will spread through the countryside!"

The girl became white with rage and humiliation. She writhed in her seat.

"You do not love me now, Nathan," she said bitterly.

"I love you so well that I am unwilling to let you go. And I will not do so, save for a consideration. I must be paid to keep my mouth shut, and to burn those amorous letters."

"You would sell me for a scrap of land!"

"It is you who are selling yourself, when you know that you belong to me."

"You dare not do what you threaten."

"Dare! who will be hurt? Not I. Tell me, is anything settled, settled as far as may be without my consent?"

"I will not answer you!" exclaimed Dinah, now flushing crimson.

"It matters not. I can easily find out."

"How will you do that?"

"I shall go to Rhoson and ask to see old John Evans, and learn what I want from him —and put a spoke in the marriage chariot-wheel at the same time so as to bring it to a standstill."

"You are cruel; you drive me mad." She turned alternately white and red, and her eyes now sparkled and then dimmed with tears. "And, Nat, after what has passed between us——"

"Exactly. After what has passed between us you have no right to be taking up with Shone Evans, simply because he has good prospects."

"Oh, Nat! It is not that. One cannot always marry the one that we desire."

"No," said he, "that is true." His mocking tone changed, and he spoke with gravity. "What is settled—if settled aught be?"

"It is so far agreed that we are to be married at Christmas."

"Humph!" said Nathan; "then my cottage must at once be put in repair, and I must see to my fields."

"That is what you think about!"

"It is the only thing that can make up to me for my loss, and made up to me it shall be."

"I dare not, oh, Nat, I dare not speak to mother!"

"You must either whisper it into one ear or it will be brayed into both her ears by all the fools in St. David's. You have no choice. It is one or the other—known to you, me, and Mrs. Bowen, or to all the world."

"What is to be done? Oh, what can I do?" cried Dinah, bursting into tears. "I wish I had not known you."

"Come," said Nathan, "I will give you a week in which to speak with your mother, and screw her to the point of making over the bit of land and cottage to me. Now I have another matter to speak about. You may like to hear further of Tarw."

"Was John Evans bitten—hurt at all?" she asked, sensibly relieved at the turn he had given to the conversation.

"Not he—John would have been, but a girl from the Waun, Sheena Lewis, happened to come up the lane, and as she wore a fur coat, that attracted the attention of Tarw and diverted it from Shone."

"How comes she to have a fur coat?"

"I cannot say. It was made, I fancy, of fox-

skins, and that was too much for Tarw. He flew at her and would have torn her."

"With you looking on?"

"Before I could interfere, that ape, Davie Narberth, was on him and throttled the life out of him. It was a wonderful sight. I did not suppose he had such force in his misshapen body."

Dinah said nothing. Her mind was not occupied over Tarw and Sheena Lewis. She was thinking of the alternatives placed before her, and was in the utmost perplexity how to act.

Nathan Groes was, as already said, a dark man. He was handsome, though the expression of his face was not pleasing. The solid jaw and set lips proclaimed determination and tenacity of purpose. Nathan Groes was a foundling.

One day a poor woman, not Welsh, speaking English, coming no one knew whence, had gone through St. David's, begging to be taken in; but because she was a stranger all shrank from admitting her to their houses.

She expected soon to be a mother, and this fact made those to whom she appealed doubly reluctant to harbour a person wholly unknown to them, with the further prospect of being burdened for some time with her and her child. Each to whom she applied expressed sympathy

and regret, and recalled the fact that a neighbour had a spare room. Night fell. Every householder hoped and reckoned that the unfortunate creature had been lodged somewhere.

But when morning broke she was found in a dying condition on the steps of the broken cross that rose in the centre of the town, with her new-born babe in her arms.

The woman was at once removed to a place of shelter, and every householder blamed every other householder for hardheartedness in having rejected her in the evening.

The woman died, was buried, and the child was brought up by repentant St. David's. A little money was raised by subscription to indemnify a poor widow who was charged with nursing it. This woman had treated the child harshly, had never shown it any love, and endured the charge solely for the sake of the scanty remuneration she received.

The child, a boy, was made to work from the earliest age at which he could be made useful, put on insufficient nutriment to hard labour. In that strong and stimulating air, he grew and throve. When the woman became too aged and feeble to maintain the lad longer he was passed from one house to another, and everywhere used as a drudge. He belonged to nobody, and therefore nobody cared for him.

He had been called Groes, or Cross, because born on the steps of the stump of the old cross in the square.

As Nathan Groes grew up to vigorous manhood he became a handsome as well as a well-built man, but his moral nature had not developed happily. From childhood he had met with ill-usage and disregard; love had been strange to him, and as nobody cared for him, he considered it his supreme duty to care for himself.

At the age of fifteen he had been taken on at a farm, and had been retained there till he passed into the service of Mrs. Bowen, of Ty Gwyn, as her handy man and factotum.

That was three years ago.

Since the acquisition of Nathan, Mrs. Bowen had not had occasion to complain of inattention or inactivity. She was not a woman of expansive and genial character. She accepted his services in return for payment, and expressed no appreciation of his work and admitted him to no confidence. Sternly she kept him in his place, and let him understand that, between a menial and a well-to-do landowner, occupying a farm, a great and impassable gulf was fixed.

"Hush!" exclaimed Dinah, starting in her chair, "my mother's step."

At once a change came over the demeanour

and appearance of Nathan. His face lost its wicked, fascinating expression, and assumed one of deference. He took his cap between his hands and twirled it nervously; his head was slightly bowed, and his knees bent.

Mrs. Bowen entered.

"How is this?" she asked, looking with surprise at Nathan. "What has brought you into my parlour? Why are not you at your farm work?"

"I have just stepped in," replied the man obsequiously, "to inform Miss Dinah of the loss of Tarw."

"Tarw! how Tarw?"

"He broke his chain, ma'am, and attacked a girl coming up the lane, a beggar-girl—and Mr. David Narberth went to her assistance, and strangled and crushed the life out of the poor beast."

"Then he must find me another," said Mrs. Bowen, "or I will have the law of him. If beggar-girls come here they must take the consequences. For what else do I keep a house-dog?"

CHAPTER V

THE peninsula of St. David's is a district of very peculiar character. It is walled off from the rest of Pembrokeshire by the chain of the Preseley Hills, that rise in bold moorland heights, crowned with castellated crags. It consists of an elevated tableland slightly indented, standing above the sea that beats around it against magnificent cliffs.

It is drained by no important river. Only brooks fret their way down to the ocean. A furrow crosses it at its extremity, in which runs, or rather saunters, the tiny stream of the Alun, which must at one time have been a strong-flowing river to have torn for itself such a ravine as that which it now inadequately occupies.

From out of the tableland start up bold fangs of rich, purple-red rock, and towards the north is the fragment of a hill-chain, shortly interrupted, and then, after a considerable interval, another outcrop of hill and rock forms the remarkable, once fortified, height of Penberry.

The region is desolate. No trees grow there except in the hollows.

Here and there great stretches of glacial clay cover the surface as with a cere-cloth, forming moors, locally called wauns, on which the water lies, unable to percolate. The largest of these is Dowrog Moor.

The district at one time formed a petty kingdom; its last prince, Cynyr of Caer Gawch, or the Red Camp, made over his possessions to the Church, and then the monks of St. David's dug a trench and threw up a bank to cut off their land from that which was secular, and to form all that portion within into a refuge and sanctuary for such as fled from misrule, or from the consequences of their crimes. Bank and moat remain to the present day, through a portion of its course from sea to sea, tolerably intact.

Almost every headland and height has been fortified. The region must have formed a battlefield for contending races from a remote period. Irish pirates came over, harried and burnt. Then came Norsemen and Danes; and lastly, Normans and English. Two great horns of land, stretching out into the sea, enclose the Bay of St. Bride, one of the noblest in Europe, but one practically useless as a harbour because open to the furious western gales, that drive

the billows into it, where they leap at the cliffs and tumble over each other, in the wildest turmoil, much as a maddened drove of sheep before hooting herdsmen and barking dogs.

Through a gap in the Preseley Hills, of old, the Romans ran a paved road, straight as a bow-line to the coast, where it dives into and disappears under the sand-downs. It is a monument of an unaccomplished purpose. At Porth Mawr, where it terminates, the Conquerors of the World designed gathering a fleet for the subjugation of Ireland. The subjugation was never attempted.

Throughout the district the fields are walled about with loose stones, compacted only by their own weight, and within them range black cattle with long and very white horns. Over all fly and scream the gulls, guillemots and kittiwakes, descending on every ploughed field in swarms to vary the diet drawn from the salt sea with the sweeter grubs of the soil.

The city of St. David's is a village of plain modern houses, without an attempt at architectural features. There are very few shops, and there are three inns. The cathedral does not show from a distance, it lies below the general level, in the ravine of the Alun. The pinnacles only of the central tower peep above the surface of the surrounding land.

The descent into that ravine is by a long flight of steps, and leads to bowery trees, lush meadows, and the mighty cathedral and the ruins of an episcopal palace, the like of which when roofed not even Canterbury could match.

The site was chosen as hidden from the Dane and Northman pirate, and as sheltered from the hurricanes from the sea. Now it is symbolical of the Church itself in Wales, cowering before the bluster of dominant Calvinism, that would fain level it with all its historic glories in the dust.

Separated from the mainland by a race of green sea is the island of Ramsey, rising into two considerable hills, buttressed boldly against the sea that thunders and rages around it, but dipping towards the coast with a lap full of green meadow, and with a little harbour.

To reach Ramsey a boat leaves Porth Stinian on the mainland, where is a ruined chapel, with recesses in the wall for the accommodation of pilgrims desirous of visiting the isle, where they might rest and await a favourable tide. Hard by this port, but further inland than the chapel, near an erupted bunch of rock, lies Rhoson, at the edge of a waun on which lies a pool, and a morass that is impassable on account of the white adhesive clay that underlies the moss and weed.

In the farm lived John Evans the elder, with his son John and his stepson David Narberth. The farmhouse was solidly constructed of stone, and had one of those enormous chimneys that are erroneously supposed to be Flemish, because numerous examples are found in "Little England beyond Wales," the country east of Preseley stretching to the sea and including Gower, which was colonised with Flemings by Henry I. But these chimneys, though found there, are met with as well in that portion of Pembrokeshire which is purely Welsh.

The object of these constructions was economic. By contracting the orifice the smoke was made to rush out in a current sufficiently strong to find its way, in defiance of the brawling winds from the sea that sought to penetrate everywhere, even to descend the chimney and invade the house.

The slates of the roof were set in mortar, and the entire house, roof included, was thickly encrusted with whitewash, applied, layer on layer, annually, till the slates were buried under a crust as thick as paste to an apple puff.

Within, under the vast cavity of the chimney, sat John Evans, senior, smoking, and warming his shins.

"Well," said he, as his son entered, "so you are back. I hope everything has gone off well."

"Fairly," replied John the younger.

"How fairly? In these affairs you must be up in a balloon or down with the anchor, and not that of hope. Have you settled matters with her?"

"Oh yes. That is all right. We are to be married at Christmas."

"Famous. Have a glass of ale, Shone; her mother is a managing woman, and I trust Dinah will turn out the same. A young woman in the house who will look after it as her own has become a necessity. If you do not marry I shall, if only to confound the devices of the housekeepers."

"But suppose Dinah does not possess her mother's qualities?" asked John laughingly, as he took a stool by the fire, facing his father, and lit a pipe.

"In that case I shall pack you and her off to Ty Gwyn to make the best of it you can together, and engage another housekeeper. I have no very keen relish for the risks of another wife. I had rather you tried the experiment than I. A housekeeper keeps everything in admirable order for a twelvemonth, and then one has to shuffle her off. Shone, I am weary to the bone of them—these housekeepers are all alike. I know every twist of their minds. I have only to go to the window

and whistle, and thay come flying up from all Pembrokeshire and Carmarthen to boot. For, Shone, I am a widower, in rude health and of a robust constitution; my pockets are well lined; I own broad acres, and my fields are well stocked. I possess not only Rhoson, but also Ramsey Isle. Housekeepers! they come as keen as rats after anise-seed."

"You have had some good housekeepers, father, and I have rather wondered at your dismissing them. They never remain here beyond a year."

"I do it out of self-protection and preservation, Shone," said the old man. "Not one of them sets her foot across the threshold but looks round and thinks: 'All this will be mine, if I manage adroitly.' When she comes she is mighty obliging: she sees the moment a stitch is wanting in my coat, she knows when a button is gone. Shone! take a word from me. Never let a woman, other than a wife, sew a button on your shirt collar whilst it's on you. It's dangerous, and many a housekeeper has tried it upon me. But I would not hear of it. I've shifted my shirt. Then one's night garment is warmed in winter before the fire, over a chair. My shirts are starched and white as the walls of my house. If I sneeze, there is mulled and spiced ale for me at night. The beef is not

done to leather, nor the liver burnt to chips. The pans in the dairy shine like silver. When the weekly accounts are brought to me I am pleased to find how little money has been expended. But it all means ME, Shone. And when at length the housekeeper begins to take interest in a game of draughts one is playing, and stands behind the chair, and leans over, and breathes on the scruff of one's neck, then, Shone, it is time to let her understand that she has played her little game badly, and that the door has an outside as well as one within. When she has found this out the aspect of affairs changes. And then it is high time for her to go. I will say this—she doesn't want to stay. And yet some women are plaguy hard to convince that they are not wanted, and have managed their tactics badly."

"Well, father," said young John, pouring himself out a glass of ale, "I trust Dinah will make you comfortable."

"I intend that she shall," said the old man. "You see, she is young, and I doubt not is pliable. And she will see, from the outstart, that I intend to have everything well done. She will have to mend my clothes, wash, cook, look to the maids and keep the accounts. She must understand what she will have to do, and do it well, or out she goes. I don't marry her,

but you do. One can change a housekeeper, but not a wife." He drew a long whiff, and then asked :

"Where is Davie?"

"Looking after the horse."

"We are not bound to keep Davie here," said the old man. "But he makes himself useful. I suppose Mrs. Bowen can make him do her work. If Dinah doesn't prove all I expect, you can go with her to Ty Gwyn and send Davie here. I'll perhaps marry him to some handy woman. If she is all I expect, well; if not, I can push 'em both off. I'm not obliged to keep him, as he's not my flesh and blood."

"Where I am—there Davie must be—he is next to my heart, father. By the way, I want to send a load of turf to the cottage on the Waun."

"To what cottage?"

"That where is Sheena—I mean Mrs. O'Grady."

"And what do you want turf for her—for?"

"She is a very poor old woman."

"Tut! There are plenty of poor. We can't give them all turf."

"No, but I have promised a load to Mrs. O'Grady, and a promise must be kept."

"You were a fool to make it. The poor will be poor, and we can't skin ourselves to clothe them in chamois leather."

"One cannot see poor creatures starve of cold in winter."

"Certainly not, Shone. If we have not stiff necks, we can look another way."

"But I did see it."

"Well, a load of turf is no great matter. But don't be too generous, Shone; it does not pay. We owe to Heaven a seventh of our time—and that's coming it rather strong, and a tithe of our substance, and a tithe of our morality. Stick at that and don't exceed. As to that woman O'Grady, what does she live by?"

"I hear she makes coverlets of patchwork, and cloth rugs."

"Order one, and when the bill comes in deduct the turf."

Then the old man went on smoking, and stretched his legs towards the fire, and fell to musing.

"There are a hundred and twenty acres in Ty Gwyn farm," he said, "and free run over the common land out to the Head."

"I believe so, father."

"What age is Mrs. Bowen?"

"I have not an idea."

"She has a full habit, and may drop off soon," he further mused. "It will be a nice addition to Rhoson. Not that you are coming into that, boy, for many a year."

Young John said nothing.

"Some of the land is sandy, but good for sheep. By Jove, Shone, if you had not taken Dinah, with the reversion, I would. It would be a sad thing to let such a nice little farm slip away when it was to be had for the asking."

CHAPTER VI

NO two lives run absolutely parallel. Although there may be a parallelism through a portion of their career, yet divergence of direction ensues at some point. No plants grow precisely alike. No two cats are marked in exactly the same manner.

There was a certain similarity in the early lives of David Narberth and of Nathan Groes, but in the result there was a branching off into diversity. This was not only in the course of events that marked their lives, but in the bent and quality of their minds.

Two children are cradled in the same crib, nurtured at the same breasts, surrounded by the same environment, learn the same lessons, see the same faces, and one goes to the right and the other to the left. Hogarth's two apprentices worked under the same master at the same looms, had the same chances, received the same wages, and one became a great merchant and the other died on the gallows. Two women are grinding at one mill, and the one is taken and the other left.

Hateful as is Augustinian predestination, yet in all evil things and ugly thoughts there lies a germ of truth, and certain it is that the trend of characters differs even from the mother's womb. Indeed predestination touches and directs the unborn babe in that it is marked to be either a male or a female.

There was a certain similarity in the early lives of David and of Nathan, as has been said above. David was not indeed a foundling, but he had been left an orphan, and his widowed mother, a hard woman, had married John Evans, of Rhoson, who took her because he concluded that she would make a good farmer's wife and trusty mistress of a household.

He was not mistaken in thinking her a managing woman; but she managed more than he approved, for she managed him. A rasping, exacting woman, she had ruled labourers, serving-women, and husband. She had possessed a bitter tongue, and the bitterness was like that of the quassia cup that never exhausts itself. It overflowed not only on husband and domestics, but also on her child.

Born into the world with the critical faculty unduly developed, she could see faults everywhere, and good, not to say perfection, nowhere. Conscientious she was as to her obligations, but she considered everything she

had to do as a hardship, and everyone with whom she was brought in contact as an enemy. She seemed to entertain a positive delight in wounding, and was possessed of ingenuity in discovering precisely where people were most sensitive, and what could be said that would cause them the acutest pain.

David had tasted but little of the milk of human kindness; he had been brought up on gall administered by his mother.

John Evans looked on the unfortunate step-son with something like resentment. He could not forget the humiliations, the insults that had been heaped on him by his wife, and when she was dead he was disposed to re-taliate on the boy.

Upon the birth of the young John, David was constituted his nurse. It is possible that having to carry about a heavy child, before his own bones had become consolidated, had led to the insufficient development of his nether limbs.

No love had been shown to David by his mother, his step-father had regarded him with dislike, and all the love that swelled in his childish heart had gone forth towards his step-brother.

John grew up a fine, vigorous, clean-built, handsome young man, to the pride and delight

of David, across whose mind passed not a shadow of envy.

In David was a far-away, humble adoration of his grand brother with fair prospects, honest, healthy mind, high principle, manly exterior. He was content and happy to be a satellite about his sun.

Nevertheless there had been a void in David's heart, a want of something, he knew not what.

On the Waun lived Lewis, a fiddler, with his mother-in-law, an Irishwoman, and his wife. Lewis was a poor creature: he fiddled in the public-houses, he drank, and was naught as a workman, taking up a task here and there, and never continuing in service anywhere long, for he was unreliable.

By some chance, David had become acquainted with this man, and had found pleasure in his society, and from him he had learned to play the violin. With the acquisition of this faculty the want in his soul had been filled up. As a boy he had been content to sit and listen, then he had learned to finger the strings and use the bow, and the thrill of a new life had passed through him.

When at Rhoson he heard but the wrangling of his step-father and his mother, and her harsh voice raised in incessant scolding.

The lonely boy had stolen away, unregarded, to the cottage on the moor, to lose himself in the sphere of music, to feel his heart expand, his soul unfurl its wings, to rise to a region above bitter words and sordid worries. Lewis had found pleasure in the work of teaching so apt and enthusiastic a pupil.

Years passed; David's mother died. He remained on at Rhoson as a drudge upon the farm. He grew strong, though he was misshapen, and executed work better than the hired labourer; but he worked without receiving pay, got no thanks, no recognition of his really valuable services. Meanwhile the inner life of the youth grew and throve, the music was ever with him, as a breath of sweet air fanning his weary brow, as a halo irradiating him in his common tasks. When Lewis the fiddler died, with his dying breath he bequeathed his instrument to David. Old John Evans would not endure the squealing of the catgut in Rhoson, and David had been accustomed, after the death of Lewis, to go to the cottage and fiddle there upon the instrument of its late master.

And thus it came about that David Narberth had become very intimate with Mrs. O'Grady and with Sheena, her granddaughter, bound to

both by ties of the tenderest affection and gratitude.

If there had been a certain parallelism in the lives of David and Nathan so far, it extended no further. Both were orphans, both had met with hard usage. Neither had been nurtured in an atmosphere of love, neither had any prospects of advancement in life. But what had saved David from self-seeking and becoming unprincipled was his early custody of little Shone, and his love of music. He had found in the latter a vehicle for the passing forth of all the aspirations, the sorrows of his soul, without putting them into words.

The result was that David was gentle and uncomplaining, given to dreams, acquiescing in being thrust into the background, content to receive very different treatment from that accorded to his half-brother John.

But he had his compensations.

John was warm-hearted, devotedly attached to his half-brother. He patronised him somewhat. He looked upon him as not wholly bright in his intellects, as commoner natures ever will regard such as are higher strung.

And John was always prompt to take David's part against his father; so much so, and so decidedly, that after a struggle or two, and a bluster and storm, the old man had given

way, and had allowed John to bring his brother forward more than he himself approved.

If David had loved Shone when the latter was a helpless and dependent child, and he an urchin hardly able to stagger under the weight of his burden, he loved him far more now that John stood up for him, and their positions were reversed, the once protected becoming the protector.

David had not introduced his half-brother to the cottage on the Waun. He went there by himself to fiddle, and to talk to the old woman and her grandchild. It was his great relaxation.

He perhaps thought that the association was not such as old Evans would have relished for his son and heir ; and though he did not allow it to himself, he desired to be there alone with his instrument, and with the society of the two only people who could understand him.

David was seated by the fire in the cottage ; on the further side was Sheena, with her arm in a sling. Before the hearth on a stool crouched the grandmother.

The red glow of the turf fire was on them all, and danced in cornelian sparks in the girl's large eyes.

Outside shone the moon, and its blue light shot in through the little window, forming a broad, glaring patch on the floor.

David had his violin under his chin. He had been playing, and as he played his eyes dilated, and rested on the dreaming girl.

He played the old airs he had acquired from Sheena's father—now an Irish melody, then one of the delightful, familiar Welsh airs, and then he wandered away into variations evolved from his own mind, and strains that gushed as rivers of living water from his own soul.

His short, misshapen legs were curled before him.

Although his eyes rested on those of Sheena, and seemed to draw inspiration from them, the girl did not see him; her eyes were fixed on something far beyond the bounds of the cottage, stretching, straining after the unattainable.

"Ah, mother," said David, pausing in his playing, "what a grand boy is Shone! It was he who thought of you, shivering through the winter, and he made the old man consent to your having a load of turf. I could not have done that had I gone on my knees for it. No one else but Shone could have got him to allow that. I have often told you what a good heart he has. You have thought that I exaggerated, because you had not seen him. Now you have felt his goodness. Trust me.

If you want more later on, towards spring, he will contrive to wring another cartload out of old Mr. Evans. He alone can do that. Shone is a glorious fellow, one to love and to be proud of. To think that Shone and I should have had the same mother! He a king of men, and I—such as I am. But God made me, and I am content. Indeed I have my joy here, and that I owe to you and to Sheena's father." He addressed Mrs. O'Grady, but he looked at the girl.

And as he spoke the far-off look passed from Sheena's eyes, and she was attentive to his every word.

"Until yesterday," said the old woman, "I had not seen him at all at all. He never set foot across my threshold."

"I never brought him here," exclaimed David. "It was not his fault, if fault there be, it was mine. I was selfish in my happiness."

A flush had risen to Sheena's cheek, and there was a quiver in her eye.

"Does your arm hurt much, Sheena?" he asked.

"It is inflamed and painful," she replied.

"And if she should have the madness!" exclaimed the grandmother. "Mother of God! what should I do?" and then she passed away to another consideration. "What be all these

disturbances, Davie, darling?" she inquired. "I mane about the turnpike, that I hear talk of."

"It is nothing that touches you, mother," replied David, "but it does affect the farmers seriously. The new roads have been made, and I admit that they are very good. But they have to be paid for, and so the toll-bars have been thrown across them, and everyone who passes along the highways on horseback or in a cart must pay a sixpence or a shilling. Between here and Haverfordwest there are as many as four, and as that is our only market town, whence we procure all our goods, it becomes a heavy tax. These gates have raised much angry feeling, not among the farmers only, but the gentry as well, and there is mischief brewing."

"Mischief, what sort of mischief?"

"Our people consider the sixpences and shillings, and not the advantages of the roads."

"Och! in ould Oireland we'd soon see the end of them. But, Davie, darlin', what is that I hear about Rebecca?"

"It is a name. It is written in Scripture that Rebecca and her daughters had a blessing pronounced upon them. To Rebecca it was said, 'Thou art our sister; be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed

possess the *gate* of those that hate thee.' And folk think this applies to the toll-bars. I have heard that elsewhere Rebecca and her daughters have been out and about at night, smashing the gates, and doing violence. May they not come here! And yet," added David, "the exactions are almost intolerable. They consume the profits of what is sent into market, and enhance the price of all goods brought into St. David's. You see, we are in a corner of the world, and there is transport over fourteen miles; that is bad enough, and when we have four gates as well to pass through and pay at two, it makes living difficult. I have heard my step-father cry out against the new roads, and he is not a man inclined to violence. I do not myself think he would be sorry if Rebecca and her daughters were to visit Dewisland."

"And who is Rebecca herself?" asked the old woman.

"That is what none but her daughters know. I hold that there are several, one in this district, another in that, the leaders of the several gangs that go about wrecking the toll-gates."

The door was flung open and Shone Evans entered.

"Well," said he cheerily, "how goes on the arm? Where is Sheena?"

"Here," said the girl, and a rich flush crimsoned her face.

"See," exclaimed David triumphantly, "what a heart Shone has! I knew that he would come to inquire how you are."

The girl stood up.

John Evans strode towards her and took her hand in his.

"What, your arm in a sling! Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Wisha!" exclaimed the grandmother, "it's yourself we must thank for the turves."

"That is nothing," said John carelessly. "They are not mine—they belonged to my father."

"But we might have been frozen to cold stones afore he'd have sent the turf but for you."

"What, Davie here!" John turned on his half-brother. "Oh, fiddling again!"

"Yes, Shone, Mother O'Grady and Sheena delight in the old music."

"We shall hear strange music shortly," said John.

"What music?"

"Rebecca and her daughters are out," he replied, "and coming this way."

David ran to the door. John did not accompany him. Still holding Sheena's hand in his,

and looking into her face earnestly, he asked in a grave tone, "Tell me the truth, did Nathan set the dog on you?"

She winced, and drew her hand away, and remained silent.

"I insist on knowing," said he.

"Do not ask me — or do not expect an answer," she replied, with a timid glance upward. "No good can come of your being told."

"But I must know, Sheena"; he grasped her hand again. "I am a resolute man, and I will hold you prisoner till you give me the information I require."

"And I am a resolute girl," she answered, "and will say nothing."

"They are coming!" shouted David from the doorway. He turned, and saw his half-brother standing in the rosy glow, with Sheena's hand in his, and their eyes meeting.

A spasm passed through his frame.

"Why did Nathan set on Tarw?" asked John.

"Sure now, and why don't you tell the gintleman?" put in Mrs. O'Grady. "It is all because Nathan has been persecuting her, and not letting the colleen alone, and she was going her way to complain to Mistress Bowen, and get her to speak to him about it."

"He shall vex you no more," said John; "keep within."

His ear had caught the tramp of feet.

"I am coming, Davie!" he shouted.

"Rebecca is here," called back his half-brother, but this time he did not look round.

CHAPTER VII

THE moon shone on the Waun, and the great Dowrog Pool gleamed like a silver shield.

In the city—city by right, in fact village—of St. David's a few yellow lights glinted.

The sky overhead was not cloudless; some lumbering masses, illumined by the moon, like drifting heaps of snow, floated along in grey sky, slowly before a north wind.

The coarse grass and reeds of the moor were frosted by the moonlight. Out of the level land stood up the crags, dark against the sky, and no token was visible of the deep cleft in which ran the Alun and where nestled the cathedral.

Away, out of sight, moaned the ever-heaving sea. A white road stretched away past the cottage, blotted out as well as the moor, when there fell over it the shadow of a cloud.

Along this road from the town moved a dark mass of figures, grotesquely disguised, and with an occasional flash of moonlight on hayforks and scythes that were borne.

At intervals a cow-horn was blown. About a dozen men, dressed as females, in every scrap of female attire that could be begged or borrowed, formed the nucleus of the advancing crowd.

Some had short petticoats on them, below which appeared men's trousers and boots. One or two of lesser stature wore gowns too long for them tucked up in front, and trailing behind. Some had shawls cast over their shoulders, others wore them over their heads and pinned under their chins.

One, a tall fellow, had his head encased in a frilled white cap, surmounted by a peaked Welsh hat. All had their faces covered with veils or pieces of black cloth, with holes for their eyes to peer through—all but two, who, having been unable to procure such a covering, had blackened their skin with soot and grease.

Surrounding this little body and following it was a swarm of boys, laughing, chattering, shouting, and performing gambols.

The Rebeccaites made no secret of their purpose. All the farmers and tradespeople were in sympathy with them. There was but one constable in St. David's, and he was hard of hearing what he did not desire to learn. Had the rioters forced themselves upon him,

he would have turned his face to his clock and wound it up.

Nevertheless, though confident that they would not be arrested, and though they marched openly to the destruction of the bars and toll-houses, they were careful so to disguise themselves that they might not be individually recognised. A farmer might be well aware that his servant-man, perchance his son, was out at night, and did not return till late, and then hear that on the same night a toll-gate had been demolished. How was he to know that the man had not been carousing at the tavern? Charity thinketh no evil; it would be against his conscience to suspect one who served him well, and against whom he had no evidence. A master might in the morning notice black marks about his servant's face, but how they came there he was not called upon to inquire, nor did curiosity prompt him to investigate the matter.

Women had lent their discarded garments, but it had been on the plea put forward that they were required for Christmas mumming, for the play of St. George and the Dragon, and rapier dancing, and that long preparation and dress rehearsals were necessary.

One urchin, in a conglomerate costume compounded of incongruous and unfitting articles

of both male and female attire, with a bonnet on his head, and a full-breasted bodice but no skirts, carried a lantern slung from a pole, and under his arm was a bundle of sticks that had been smeared with brimstone.

The tall personage with the frilled cap topped by a steeple hat was obviously the leader, the Rebecca of that particular family of daughters. He wore a scarlet cloak over his shoulders, as could be seen when the lantern swung over him. A long pole was carried by him, as the bâton of a marshal. His stride was masculine. In his disguise he assumed an air of superiority over the rest, and in his bearing was the insolence of one unaccustomed to command.

John looked at him attentively as he drew near. Rebecca and her daughters were on their way to smash the toll-gate on the Fishguard road. The axes would demolish the gate, the sulphur sticks and lantern were prepared for the destruction of the toll-house by fire.

At this period of excitement it was usual, at first at least, to forewarn the gate-keeper, by an anonymous letter, to quit the place before it was visited.

But the man did not invariably accept the warning. He had entered into a contract, his

welfare depended on the maintenance of the toll, and he had the law at his back.

If, on reception of a threatening letter, he appealed to the constables, they would shake their heads and say that they could not take cognisance of an unsigned document. Obtaining no assurance of protection from them, he might address himself to the magistrates, who would offer their counsels of perfection — or promise to take action, and do nothing. If, however, there should chance to be one of these justices fussy, energetic, desirous of pushing himself into notoriety, he might send for the military. Then trouble ensued; arrests were made, much angry feeling was aroused, and consternation fell on the neighbourhood at the prospect of transportation for some of its young men.

Where no violence was done to toll-gates and houses, there attempts were made to evade the payment of the due.

The farmer, the landowner as well, would break gaps in the walls about their fields to allow those who rode or drove to deviate from the highway, and by a circuitous course to reach the road again a little beyond the gate.

During the European war, under the strong hand of Napoleon, the whole of France had had its ways recast; the roads were made direct

and were carried over hills at easy gradients, so as to allow of the rapid transport of artillery along them. Thus the entire surface of the land was crossed and recrossed by main roads of the most admirable description, wide and well constructed.

England had lagged behind. Its highways were a discredit to civilisation. Tracks for pack-horses had served till carriages were introduced, and then these conveyances jolted over stones thrown down to fill ruts, and unbroken. At length the Government took the highways in hand, but without carrying its purpose through in the best possible manner. There was a compromise. Instead of making new roads at a level, they cobbled up the old ways that went over hill and down dale, swerving this way and then that, where the track was first trodden by man in primeval times.

Yet even this cost a good deal of money. The ways were macadamised; and for this stones must be broken, and to break the stones men must be paid wages.

In order to widen the roads the old hedges were pulled down, and this involved the setting up of fresh hedges. The fields were encroached upon. Occasionally an engineer cut through a gentleman's garden, or a farmer's orchard, hewing down precisely the very Rib-

ston pippins he most valued. Then the road was to be carried on an embankment to save the rise of a few feet of hill, and earth had to be brought to the spot, and the road had to be buttressed up at great expense. Not only did this procedure touch the pockets of the land-owners, but it galled their pride to have, as they termed them, Jacks-in-office, whipper-snappers sent down to them from London to chop up their land, and sweep aside their rights, disregard their claims, and ignore their objections.

There were others interested in having the roads left as they had been, who looked with resentful eyes at these new highways: the blacksmith in every village who might calculate on a job when a chaise broke down; the taverner who took in a party and lodged it for the night whilst the conveyance was being repaired.

Then came the erection of the toll-bars, which were to pay the cost of the making and maintaining of the road. The man who dared to take a toll-gate was held to be as infamous as was the publican to the Jews.

Finally, the Rebecca riots broke out, and throughout the country Rebecca and her daughters were out demolishing the gates and the toll-houses. At first, as already said, they gave warning to the keepers, but as on some

occasions these latter had taken precautions which had led to the dispersion of the rioters and their arrest, these anonymous warnings were no longer sent.

John looked intently at the leader. He could not be sure who the fellow was, as his face was covered with a dense black veil. The shoulders were broad; he was taller than the rest, and the steeple hat made him or her look taller than in reality.

The party swept on, the swirling body of urchins dashing ahead.

As Rebecca came before the door he stood still, looked at the two young men, and at the rosy glow of the cottage room lighted by the fire. Then all at once, as moved by an uncontrollable impulse, he struck a backhanded blow at David full in the face.

The deformed young fellow reeled before it, coming as it did so unexpectedly. But Shone had seen it, and he sprang on the assailant, and plucked his veil aside.

"I thought as much," shouted John; "I was sure it was you, Nathan. Now I have a double account to settle with a coward."

Nathan swung his pole, and whirling it round his head, holding it with both hands, sought to strike John Evans on the side of his head and fell him. But before he could do this David

had leaped like a squirrel, and had caught the weapon and borne it down under him. Next moment he had wrenched it from the hands of the leader. Having got possession of it, he stood across the road, and swung it from side to side to keep off the rabble. His brother, his glorious brother, was fighting for him, revenging the blow dealt him. Let him have free space to fight and punish the offender.

"What have you to settle with me?" asked Nathan. "The blow I gave to your brother? Bah! It was not intended."

"It was dealt deliberately. I saw it," said John. "But that is not all. There is another account to be discharged. You let Tarw loose against a girl—a defenceless girl. And for that I will chastise you."

"So! for Davie Narberth's wench!"

"For her, for anyone who is insulted."

And in an instant the men were grappling. Some of the Rebeccaites would have interfered, but David kept them at a distance, whirling the pole about him as a flail.

In one of these sweeps he struck the lantern that was slung from a forked stick; it was dashed to the ground, and in its fall was extinguished.

Nathan and John fought. Neither was an experienced wrestler. Each sought to gain

some advantage over the other. They were well matched in strength, as in youth.

A fury of rage and resentment was blazing in the heart of John, and sending flames through every artery. Nathan fought in sullen and stubborn resentment, till, casting his eye towards the cottage door, he saw Sheena standing in it. Then there boiled up in his heart a frantic determination to show her what he was, and how he surpassed even such as Shone Evans, the son of the wealthy farmer of Rhoson.

The sound of the contest had been too much for Mrs. O'Grady to endure without being a close witness of "the fun." She had run to the door, and Sheena, filled with terror, had followed her grandmother.

The light from the fire formed a red belt across the road, and those engaged in the struggle swung within its radiance, and as they did so the scarlet cloak of Rebecca glared as a poppy.

The spectacle now presented was indeed strange. As seen by the women, John appeared to be held in a death grip by a tall woman in a white frilled cap. The hat had fallen off. The two combatants were tossing, doubling, swerving, now one gaining a momentary advantage and then the other. Rebecca's

black whiskers protruded from below the goffered frill. The red cloak flapped about.

Sheena, with her arm in a sling, stood breathless, frozen with terror, her eyes dilated. But her grandmother, in an ecstasy of delight, was crowing, applauding, laughing.

Over all flowed the liquid moonlight, casting distorted and ever-shifting shadows on the road. The arena was kept clear by David with his whirling pole, and beyond was the dense pack of men disguised as women, and of boys.

For a moment the wrestlers parted. Then suddenly Nathan plucked off his red cloak, and holding it in both hands, rushed on John, and endeavoured to muffle and smother him with it. But next instant John had struck it down, and it fell on the ground, where it became entangled between their feet.

Each drew back breathless, quivering with passion, but with exhausted powers.

"Och!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Grady, "but sure it'll spoil the fun," and darting between them she picked up and carried off the red cloak. "Let the boys fight it out fairly."

And then—

"For Sheena!" exclaimed John.

"For Dinah!" yelled Nathan, and they closed once more.

A burdened cloud rolled before the moon, and all was dark save for white ghastly strips in the distance where the light still lay, and for the lurid glare from the cottage fire that formed a streak across the road.

The wrestlers were now beyond that streak, and nothing was visible save a huddled, tumbling black mass in the obscurity, and nothing could be heard save the gasp and gurgle of their breath, and the beat of their feet upon the road; and the swish of the flail of David.

"Be Gorra! it's foin sport," said Mrs. O'Grady appreciatively; "but it's just a sorrow it is that they haven't shillalies to bring out the paint."

Presently the wrestlers were again in the radiance cast by the fire; a twisting, knotted, turning, bending, contorted mass of battling hands and legs and bodies was all that was visible, and that but obscurely.

"Oh, Shone! Shone!" cried the girl, and her cry as of agony rang out clear. It came from her heart, and it reached John Evans.

The force of a demon was in him then. His head was a roaring cauldron, his heart as a raging furnace. He gathered himself together as into a knot and grappled Nathan; then as they swayed into the darkness came a

crash. Nathan had stumbled over the lantern and was down, and John was upon him.

"David!" he screamed, "for God's sake—the brimstone twigs!"

Without considering what his brother meant to do with what he had called for, David darted forward and wrenched the bundle of combustibles from the arm of the boy who had been charged with them, and he threw them to Shone.

John was above Nathan, who had fallen on his back in the road; he gripped the latter by the throat, and pressed his knee upon his chest.

Then he stretched out his hand for the sticks, the hand that was disengaged, got hold of them, drew them once, twice, thrice across the face of his prostrate antagonist, as he said, in short gasps: "I score you for what you did to Sheena."

CHAPTER VIII

"WHAT have you done to your face?" asked Mrs. Bowen, when Nathan Groes came into the kitchen next morning to receive orders for the day's work.

The man had red scores across his countenance, the skin was torn, and the blood had clotted in the wounds. They were not deep—mere scratches, not likely to be permanent disfigurements.

"I fell against the hayrake in the linhay," he replied.

"Fell against the rake! a fine tale," echoed Mrs. Bowen. "Why, bless the man, the marks are drawn across the face from side to side, and a rake would be standing upright against the wall."

"I don't know how it stood," replied Nathan; "it was dark in that place. All I know is that I stumbled and that my face suffered, and that this morning I found the rake down."

"You have been drinking. I will have no drunkard in my house."

"I was not at the public-house last evening. In the dark anything may happen."

"There was a moon."

"But the moon is not a lantern one can carry with one into a shed."

Dinah, who sat at the table under the window, looked intently at him. He turned his eyes towards her, but at once averted them and looked down. His handsome face was sadly marred. It did not wear a pleasant look; this was due in part to the seams that lined it, but as well to the sinister expression of the mouth and to the contraction of the brows.

"Is the rake in the linhay now?" asked the widow.

"What remains of it," replied the man; "it broke when I fell over it, and I smashed it up this morning. A thing that hurts me has not much chance."

"Go your way. You will have to make or buy me a new rake."

Half an hour later Dinah slipped out of the house, when she supposed that her mother was engaged, and went behind the shed to speak to Nathan.

Ty Gwyn was an old and rudely constructed farmhouse, with a yard before it enclosed within a stone wall, and in this yard stood the shed in question. It pointed east and west, was built

up of great blocks of red sandstone, unset in mortar. It had a narrow-arched door and slits for windows. This had been an ancient chapel, and about it, in the yard and in the garden, were numerous graves, tombs rudely constructed of slabs set on end, and with slate covering-stones. One of these graves was utilised as a pig-trough. Another received the drainage of the cow-house. Many of these early Christian graves had been destroyed, and the slabs employed in the walls; but more remained, and were struck by pick and spade when the garden was cultivated. The chapel has disappeared since the time when the events recorded in this tale occurred, and the old farmhouse was pulled down to make way for the present dwelling-house that was erected forty years ago.

"Nathan," said Dinah, "what is the meaning of this? You told my mother a lie."

"The truth is too precious to be cast to everyone. She has heard only whispers about Rebecca."

"She knows something concerning the trouble about the toll-gates. Where is my red cloak?"

"I have lost it. It was torn off my shoulders in the scuffle."

"What scuffle?"

"There was one, and I suffered in it."

"With the constable?"

"No, with spies—with two men set to watch us, and find out who were out wrecking the toll-bars. Paid for it—to give evidence, and get us transported. But they can do nothing, for nothing illegal was done last night. We intended to destroy the gate on the Fishguard road, but it came to naught, because of the fight in which I was engaged with the spies."

"Where did the fight take place?"

"On the Waun, by the cottage of the old Irish hag."

"You have been badly disfigured, Nathan! Who did it?"

"One who shall suffer for it. That story of the rake was all nonsense."

Then round the corner came Mrs. Bowen.

"What are you doing here, Dinah?" she asked in an angry tone. "Talking to Nathan, indeed!"

"Mother, I have some spermaceti ointment in my room, and I came here to offer it to him because of his scratches."

"Go within at once. And you, Nathan, pack to your work. I will keep no fellow in my service who gets into drunken brawls. I do not believe one word about the rake. You were tipsy."

Then, as she drove her daughter before her,

she said: "You hussy! It is high time that you were married. There has been too much of this sort of thing. I am not so blind as you suppose. I have seen a good deal more than you think. And Nathan, a common serving-man and a foundling! I have suspected what has been in progress. I have seen you stealing away to meet him in holes and corners. When you are married, it will be Shone's business to look after you and keep you in order. I will wash my hands of you then."

Nathan Groes walked away the moment he saw Mrs. Bowen approach.

His mind was a prey to conflicting passions. He had acted in a fit of unreasoning animosity when he had struck David in the face, on the preceding night.

Nathan had been unsettled in mind for some time, and this had produced irritability of temper, which on this occasion had overborne his judgment. The cause was this.

When Nathan Groes entered service at Ty Gwyn, a young and handsome fellow, Dinah, out of the mere wantonness of vanity, and regardless of consequences, had given him secret encouragement. Nathan had been quick to respond and take advantage of the opening offered. From stooping to captivate, Dinah had passed to be the captive. He was clever

and unscrupulous. Her mother was harsh, narrow, and severe in her treatment of her daughter. A strict Calvinist, she abhorred all that savoured of the world; no entertainment, no relaxation was allowed. Under this repression the girl became deceitful, secretive, and rebellious.

Nathan did not care for the girl, but he was aware of the advantage he had gained. He trifled with her affection, encouraged it, lured her on, let her suppose that he loved her.

If he could but secure Dinah he would become master of the farm where he had been man—he, the foundling, the despised, and disparaged. His ambition was fired.

But of late he had been brought into contact with Sheena Lewis, and the latent fire in his heart had burst forth. He was torn between his ambition and his passion. The rebuffs he met with from Sheena only made him more resolute in his pursuit.

When too late, Dinah was frightened at the consequences of her folly. Such a fellow as Nathan was no match for her. And when John Evans appeared as a suitor, favoured by her mother, she received his addresses, and hoped to escape from her entanglement with Nathan.

Nathan's mind was torn by cross-currents.

His interests ran one way, his inclinations the other.

If he succeeded in winning Sheena, he must turn his back on Ty Gwyn. He wavered; at one moment he saw clearly, and resolved on that course which opened the best prospect to his ambition. The lands on the slope of Carn Llidi were inviting, the fields yielded good crops, the outbuildings, if not excellent in quality, sufficed. There were rights of pasturage for an almost unlimited number of sheep and cattle on the moors as far out as the Head. He had to recommend him nothing but his good looks and his strong arms. But he knew that if he chose he could rip up all the ties formed, the arrangements entered into, with John Evans. He had but to threaten—and all would be his.

Passion, however, set the other way, and at times blinded him to his advantages.

The visits of John Evans to Ty Gwyn, and the prospect of Dinah becoming engaged to him, had put a notion into Nathan's head that worked there like yeast. He could force Mrs. Bowen to part the farm, and give him a portion for a trifling rent. And this would content him if he were sure of Sheena.

But Sheena was not so easily won. All his attempts in this direction had failed. With her

his handsome face and insinuating manners had produced no satisfactory result. He had hovered about the cottage. He had watched for her when she went to or returned from St. David's, that he might join her and push his suit. He had been treated at first with formal courtesy; as he became more pressing, she had let him see plainly that his society was distasteful to her.

But he was a vain man and not easily discouraged.

If his handsome exterior had fascinated Dinah, the farmer's daughter, how could the needy fiddler's orphan resist him?

A crisis had been reached when he met Sheena on her way to complain of his pursuit to Mrs. Bowen. Had the girl been allowed to proceed, a scene would have ensued with consequences he did not relish. In a fit of desperation, to avert the danger that was imminent, he had unchained Tarw. On no account must Dinah's eyes be opened to his duplicity, and cleared from the delusion that he was passionately devoted to her, that he was driven frantic with despair at losing her.

It had not been his intention to let the brute injure Sheena. He had purposed only frightening her, as he relied on his command of the dog to call it off. A furious barking at her in the

lane, and a threat to allow it to attack her, would have been enough to enforce a retreat. But the scent of the fox-skins had roused the brute to uncontrollable madness, and the sudden arrival on the scene of John Evans had disconcerted him. He had leaped the wall to let matters take their course.

Nathan had taken the notion into his head that David Narberth was the suitor favoured by the girl; why else should that deformed young man go so continually to the cottage? And it was because he entertained this idea, and was filled with rancour against David, that he had struck him in the face as he passed Mrs. O'Grady's house and saw David there, standing in the doorway.

Shone's affection and chivalrous defence of his half-brother were well known to him. Shone had never tolerated a slighting remark to be made, in his hearing, against David. And that he should have resented the blow was in accordance with what he might have expected. But he was perplexed by Shone's cry of "For Sheena!" as he flew upon him, and the words his antagonist had used when drawing the twigs across his face showed that John Evans was bent on punishing him rather for what he had done to Sheena than to David. He was wrathful against John, and fully deter-

mined on paying off the debt of his fall and scarifying. But his predominant resentment was against David, who stood in his way to Sheena.

His scheme of forcing the Bowens to surrender to him a portion of the farm as hush-money was feasible enough; but he did not want that portion without the girl on whom he had set his heart. If he could not have her, he would oust John Evans, and take Dinah and the entire farm.

Instead of proceeding to his farm work, Nathan went forth on St. David's Head, a bold promontory of beetling crags that front the Atlantic. It is swept bare at the extremity, even of turf, except in the sheltered folds. It is cut off on the land side by a huge line of prehistoric defences, once a faced wall many feet thick, now resolved into a pile of fallen stones. The entrance remains clear as the one mode of access to this stronghold of an unknown people who crowded here, on this ultimate projection of land, to defend themselves with desperation, and whence, in the event of their foes surrounding the wall, nothing remained for them but to plunge from the precipices into the sea. Around this headland the ocean is ever leaping and boiling. From it, in favourable lights, the Irish coast is visible.

Here, on a prong of rock, sat Nathan musing over his difficulties. His mind heaved and raged within, as did the sea at his feet.

What did Shone mean by his shout, "For Sheena"? This he asked again, and yet again, and found no satisfactory answer.

Was he to lose Sheena as well as Dinah—Sheena to one brother, Dinah to the other?

It was to him inconceivable that the girl on the Waun should prefer to himself a malformed, insignificant creature, with no better prospects in life. But if it were really so, then he would force Dinah to swallow her pride, and cast off the young farmer and accept him, the needy, labouring man, without known parentage, without a name, save such as had been given him from the place where he had been found.

It would be a sweet revenge on Shone to be able to cross his path, and snatch from him his intended wife and the coveted acres of Ty Gwyn.

By a strange coincidence, at this very time, John Evans was also seated on a mass of rock that broke above the undulating land near Rhoson, and, crouched among the masses of eruptive stone, he also looked out seaward.

The sea was leaden, with streaks of foam drawn across it where the waves broke over

sunken rocks. No sail was visible, and the horizon was lost in vapour as grey as the sea.

Here John could sit and think, away from his father and from the business of the farm; and there was a disquiet within him that drove him to solitude. What did Nathan mean by his cry of "For Dinah!" as he closed with him on the preceding evening? That a mere labourer on the farm, a fellow with such an origin as that of Nathan Groes, should familiarly shout the Christian name of his young mistress, and make it his battle-cry, was a piece of gross insolence.

He had himself shouted the name of Sheena, but in this he deemed himself justified, for he was fighting her battle, revenging her wrongs. The primary impulse to fly at Groes had been provoked by the blow dealt to Davie, but what had fired him, nerved him, stung him to scarify the face of the man he had thrown down, had been the insufferable pursuit of Sheena, and the barbarity of letting loose the dog against her.

Then there was another incident troubling him. He had looked at the scarlet cloak that had been over the shoulders of Nathan, but which had been under their feet as they strove, trampled in the mud, till rescued by Mrs. O'Grady. On examining it, John had found

that it was marked at the neck with the initials "D. B." Assuredly the cloak belonged to Dinah. How, then, had Nathan got possession of it? Had his young mistress lent it to him as a disguise, or had he dared to purloin it?

The possibility that Nathan was on such easy terms with her as to ask for, and be accorded, a piece of dress of no little value was not pleasant to John. Then his mind passed to little Sheena, to her great speaking eyes, her sweet pure face—so different from the striking beauty, the ruddy and somewhat luscious countenance of Dinah.

By an effort he averted his thoughts from the direction they had taken, and beat out of them the comparison he had been drawing; and he forced himself to concentrate his mind upon the girl to whom he was engaged, to sum up her beauties and advantages, and rehearse them to himself, so as to quicken his sense of satisfaction at having gained her promise.

At no very distant period she would be his wife. How happy they would be together! How well they would agree! What a delight it would be to him to have one ever at his side to whom he could unfold his inmost thoughts! Of what consequence he would be—as a married man! And there were other advantages in view. To be master of Ty Gwyn,

and prospective master of Rhoson! He would be one of the wealthiest farmers in the district, most regarded, carrying most weight. And to have one so handsome as his own, the admired of all, and she loving him so dearly! Verily he would be a happy man. He was happy now, of course, very happy at the prospect. "However," said John, rousing himself from his rocky nook and rising, "I will take that cloak to Dinah, and know how Groes came by it. I left it with Mother O'Grady. I must fetch it thence, and I will carry it with me to Ty Gwyn."

CHAPTER IX

WHEN, in the afternoon, John Evans took his way to Ty Gwyn, it was not with the eager expectation of a lover, but with the rust of a suspicion fretting his soul. He must offer an excuse for the killing of Tarw, and he would ask to have explained to him the employment by Nathan of Dinah's red cloak. As he drew near to the house no dog barked, as was the case formerly, nor did he see, as he had been wont, the face of Nathan Groes peering at him from the barn door or from behind a wall. That fellow had hitherto always been on the watch for him, and John Evans had resented his prying. Upon entering the farmhouse, he saw Mrs. Bowen and her daughter seated and engaged in needlework; the table was covered with materials of a bright colour, and old garments were strewn on the floor.

He laid his bundle on a chair near the door. It had not been done up in paper. He had gathered the cloak up as found in the cottage, and as he set it down there was no mistaking

what it was. As he did this he noticed a slight start in Dinah and a contraction of her eyeballs. He said nothing relative to the cloak, but went up to the widow and her daughter and saluted them. "Busy!" said he.

"We have occasion to be so," replied the mother, "and—there's a bit of lining upstairs that I must look for. It may serve, and so save us the expense of buying new material. Time flies fast."

"Before you go," said John, "I should desire to explain to you about Tarw. My brother throttled the dog. He was forced to do so, as it had flown upon and would have torn Sheena Lewis, unless he had gone to the rescue."

Dinah looked up and laughed.

"It was naught to laugh at," said John, offended at what he considered lack of good feeling. "The girl was badly hurt by the brute's teeth. Her arm was bitten."

"How came she to be in Tarw's way?" inquired Mrs. Bowen.

"She was coming here."

"I had not asked her. Begging, I suppose."

"She is not a beggar. You misjudge her."

"You are prepared to fight her battles now against mother, as David did against the dog. But mother does not bite," said Dinah.

"Tarw was chained up," remarked Mrs. Bowen.

"He must have broken his chain," observed Dinah.

"He had not broken his chain," retorted John; "I have just looked at it. Not a link is snapped. It was fastened to the collar by a swivel. He was let loose."

"It does not matter how he got away," said the girl.

"It does matter," said John testily. "He was unchained purposely."

"Well, the dog is dead, and we are the losers," remarked the widow. "I do not relish having this house undefended, and the whole neighbourhood disturbed."

"Oh!" laughed John, "the Rebeccaites will not hurt you. This is no toll-gate, and for aught you know to the contrary, you may have one of the gang about the premises to protect you."

"I do not understand you," said the old mother, and departed.

When she had left the room, John turned on the girl and said, "Why did you laugh, Di?"

"It must have been a comical sight," replied she, "to see the girl tearing down the lane with Tarw at her heels, and little Davie with his short legs flying to get at the poor beast."

But that was not the real cause of her laugh. She knew, or supposed that she knew, why Tarw had been released—that was done by Nathan against John, whom he hated as his rival. It flattered her vanity to think that Nathan had done this out of his love for her.

"It was not a comical sight at all," said John gravely. There was a tremor in his voice; he was angry. "The struggle was not ludicrous—it was desperate, for life. I can well assure you it was one to curdle the blood."

"And did you stand, with your hands in your pockets, looking on?"

"I did not; I had to——" he hesitated.

"You had to do what?" she inquired, as she observed colour rise to his temples.

"I had to take care of the girl."

"But Tarw was engaged with David."

"She was out of her senses with terror."

"Oh! and you were stroking her down, and saying soft things to soothe her." She uttered a bitter laugh. She did not love John, but he was her suitor, she was engaged to him, and she did not care that he should pay attentions to any other than herself.

"We must not quarrel, Dinah," said John, controlling himself. Her words, her mood, jarred him; but he was a good-hearted fellow,

and he said in a kind tone, "You have no reason to be jealous, even if I did carry her to our cart."

"Carry her! in your arms?"

"Not pick-a-back certainly. She was almost fainting. Do not be jealous."

"Jealous!" in a tone of unutterable scorn.

"Call it what you will, of course I had to assist a terrified girl whose arm was mangled by that detestable beast. You would have urged me to it yourself had you been there." Then, to change the theme, he said: "I have brought you back your cloak——"

He went to the chair and shook out the garment.

"It is not mine," said she.

"It must be yours, Dinah. Look at the initials within: 'D. B.'"

"They stand for Deborah Barwise."

"Deborah Barwise never possessed a red cloak."

"How can you tell?"

"I have asked her. She told me so."

Dinah was silent for a moment, doubting what to say, and then resolved on persisting in denial. "It is not mine. Mine is upstairs in my cupboard."

"Fetch it me down, Di, that we may compare it with this cloak."

"I will do no such thing," said she, blazing up with wrath. "Because you find a dirty old cloak on the road you say it is mine. I say it is not."

"I did not tell you that I found it on the road. If Deborah denies it, whose can the cloak be—can you guess, Di?"

"I will not trouble my head about it," she answered contemptuously.

"Come, Di," said he, "we get on topics that cause a ruffle. Sit by me on the sofa and talk of something else—our prospects."

She obeyed, and he put his arm round her waist.

"I must have a serious discussion with you," said he, "relative to our future home."

"That will be at Rhoson," said she.

"I think not. I greatly doubt whether my father will get on well with you. I know he desires it, but I would spare you some annoyance. He is a dear old man, but exacting. He has had housekeepers who have grovelled to him as the Hindoos prostrate themselves before Juggernaut. And he expects it. He will have the warming-pan run every night between his sheets. He is particularly nice about his feeding. He has got into the way—since mother died—of finding fault with his food, with everything a housekeeper does. He

says it is to keep them in their proper place. I do not wish you to be subjected to annoyance."

"Pshaw! I can hold my own. I will soon let him see that."

"But," said John, "it would be most unpleasant either way, that he should tyrannise over you and crush your spirit, or that you should rise up in revolt against him. To escape either of these alternatives, I think it will be best that I come to live at Ty Gwyn."

"That will not do," said the girl. "If you have a despotic father, I have a mother who drives me wild. We have sermons read to us in the evenings, except when there is a meeting at the chapel. I tell you what it will be, John. If you come here, my mother will make you a member of the *sciet;* trot about to revivals and meetings of every sort, and harangue and pray at one at home. You will have to be crushed or revolt, To spare you that I intend to go with you to Rhoson."

He shook his head. "I think," said he, "I could maintain myself even against your mother."

Presently Dinah said: "I cannot be sure, but I believe that mother purposes dividing the farm."

"Dividing it! Why, that is madness."

"You see, it will be more than she can manage."

"But if I am here I will look after it. I can do that very well. It does not need two men upon it, and Nathan Groes shall go pack. I'll talk to your mother about it."

"For Heaven's sake, not a word!" exclaimed Dinah in alarm. "Leave all to me. Look, Shone, what say you to this?"

She caught up a pretty silk kerchief and drew it across her shoulders; then took a cap adorned with sky-blue ribbons and set it on her head.

"Look, Shone, what do you think of me now?" She had risen to adjust cap and kerchief, and stood facing him, and the light flowed over her. With her fresh bright colour, ripe lips, and rich dark hair and kindling eyes, all surmounted by the cap, she was indeed charming. John also had risen. He stood with his back to the window, and placed a hand on each of her shoulders and looked at her with genuine admiration. Indeed she was a handsome girl. And now, flushed with excitement, and with sparks dancing in her large eyes, she was supremely attractive. John felt it. His heart glowed, his hands trembled as he held her.

"What do I think, Di? I will show you."

He stooped and kissed the inviting mouth;

but instantly drew back. "What, Dinah! your lips taste as though you had been smoking."

She became confused for a moment, then rallied and replied, "I have a hollow tooth, and put some tobacco into it."

"But it was smoke I smelt."

"You are full of fancies," she said petulantly, then dipped a towel that was on a side-table in a basin, washed her lips, came back, looked at him archly and said: "Now how are they?" The invitation could not be resisted; but just as he stooped to kiss again she started back, an expression of alarm came into her eyes, and she raised her hand to thrust John away. Noting the direction of her eyes, he turned sharply about and caught a glimpse of the face of Nathan, who had been peeping in at the window.

"Confound the prying fellow!" exclaimed John. "The first exercise of my authority here will be to turn him off. Di, I will be plain with you. He is the Rebecca of these parts. He leads the gang, and he was wearing your cloak last night."

"My cloak!" she paused to gather her thoughts. "Oh, if it were, he must have stolen it!"

"Here comes your mother," said John; "I

must be off. Good-bye—for a while, and then no good-byes at all."

He strode away.

As he walked home he did not find that he was more at ease than when he went to the farm.

He had been offended at the heartless manner in which Dinah had received what he had said about the attack of Tarw on Sheena. But what he liked less was the deliberate manner in which she had denied that the red cloak was hers. She kept hers in her bedroom, and refused to bring it down. If Nathan had taken it, he could not have stolen it. But how had he obtained possession of it?

Every subject that had been started had led to disagreement. He wanted to move to Ty Gwyn. She had set her mind on living at Rhoson.

Then—finally—" I am sure her lips smelt of smoke, it was not tobacco in the tooth." Looking round, he saw from behind a hedge the scarred face of Nathan, with a pipe in his mouth, watching him.

CHAPTER X

WITHOUT knocking, Nathan opened the door of the cottage on the Waun, and walked on.

He had been hanging about it for half an hour, for he had heard from within the sounds of the fiddle, and he had waited impatiently for their cessation. He knew that David Narberth was within. As the farmer at Rhoson would not tolerate his playing there, he was practising on his beloved instrument where he was suffered to do so at his pleasure.

Nathan had drawn near to the door, and listened to hear Sheena's voice. He had peeped through the window, and had convinced himself that she was not within. This was exactly what he desired. He sought a few words with Mrs. O'Grady, but alone, and now David was in his way.

Many a curse had escaped his lips. He feared lest the fiddler should continue his visit till the girl's return, and so his opportunity would be lost.

However, at length David hung up his instrument against the wall, bade the old woman farewell, and left the cottage. As he did so Nathan slipped behind the wall round the corner, so as not to be seen.

As soon as David's back was turned he stepped within and shut the door behind him.

Mrs. O'Grady was seated by the fire, with her back to the light, and with a patchwork quilt over her knees. On this she was engaged; at her side was a basket piled up with scraps of coloured materials of various tints and qualities, into which she dipped her hand, and drew forth such pieces of chintz or silk as suited her for the work on which she was employed.

"Where is Sheena?" inquired Nathan, on entering.

"And is it Sheena, thin, ye're askin' for?" said the old woman. "She's not here at all."

"I can see that for myself. Where is she?"

"Och! but it's gone she is to her leddyship the Mistress Powell, at Tullerw, to beg some bits of silk for me. It's just that I want to complate my coverlet—something gay and bright, and sorrow but all I've got there is too dingy."

"Has she been long gone?"

"Sure but I cannot say. I've no timepiece.

It may be an hour, it may be two. There was an illigant red cloak the boys dhropped in the road, and I would have torn it up, and it would ha' made foin patches for my counterpane. But John Evans, sorrow take him, wouldn't let me; he walked off wid it to make himself a pair o' breeches out of it. It's courtin' he be, and the boys when they're doin' that likes to put on gay plumes. Your own face, Nathan, is a patchwork itself, and not beautiful at all."

"Cease talking nonsense," said he, seating himself on the table at her side, and kicking over the basket of scraps and spilling them on the floor. "I have come to speak with you, not to listen to your idle cackle."

"If you was like the ass in the tale," retorted the old woman, "that dropped gold pieces when it brayed, I'd listen to you day and night, but sorrow a thing comes from you but ugly words and curses."

"Mother," said Nathan, "to the point—you're an old woman, and can't last long."

"That's just a point I've not come to yet, but how does that concern you?"

"What I want to know," pursued Nathan, "is what is to become of Sheena when you are dead."

"It's just what will be done wid me I'd like to know when there's no money in the place

for my dacent burying. Father Nolan let me have two blessed candles for me wake to keep all evil spirits away, so you are not like to show at it."

"There," said he, thrusting a packet of tobacco into the old woman's hand, "fill your pipe and keep your mouth shut while I am talking."

"Och, honey! the blessing of Heaven be wid you!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Grady. "Talk as much as you will, and I'll listen as to a choir of angels."

"When you are gone what will become of Sheena?"

"Bedad, I can't tell. It's as much as I can do to look to her bringing home some lot of illigant coloured silk, and me eye won't stretch an inch beyond that."

"She will be left alone."

"And so she will; and the poor child will cry her eyes out, and that's a bad thing for her sewing."

"Have you ever thought of getting her married?"

"Married!" exclaimed the old woman, as she lighted her pipe; "married is it ye ask? One can't catch a husband so aisy."

"What is the meaning of that fiddling David coming here so often?"

"Why, honey, to fiddle."

"Do you not think that he has an eye on Sheena?"

"Poor Davie!" said the grandmother. "He'd have to stand on the table to take a kiss of her lips. A woman don't care to have a husband run at her side like a tame dog."

"Is there anyone else?"

"Is there anyone else, now? Why, who else should there be? If Sheena had fifty pound in a stocking the men would be after her sure enough."

"Listen to me, mother. I want her as my wife."

"Och! you do; then that's the maning of your coming here now, and giving me the 'baccy. Show me the cage first, before I let you catch the bird."

"I have a cage sure enough," answered Nathan; "a cage large enough to hold you as well as her."

"In the moon?"

"No—on Carn Llidi."

"Bah!" laughed the old woman. "Ye mane the Coitan Arthur. 'Tisn't big enough to hold ye both curled up wid your chins on your knees."

She referred to a cromlech on the headland.

"I do not mean the Coitan Arthur, but the house above Ty Gwyn."

"And how is it you'll get it?"

"I shall have it, and half the farm as well. It is promised to me. The widow Bowen is going to part the farm as she loses her daughter, and keep but one portion for herself, which she can manage with the help of a boy. I am to have the other half. Then, mother, there will be a quarter of a pound of tobacco for you every fortnight, and a drop of spirits when you like."

"When I like? Be aisy, man; you're killin' me with pleasure just to think of it. When Tim got in a bit of misfortune and was sent away to prison, poor lad, a missionary came to read wid him, and he'd just been taking a dhrop of whisky to his dinner. That's the missionary and not Tim. Well, his riverence sat down by Tim and read him a chapter of the Bible, and Tim he listened, and when he'd done, says he, 'Sir, I'm a bit hard o' hearin'; will ye now rade it over again to me, a bit nearer?' So the missionary drew his chair up, and read it all over once more. Tim he listened quiet enough, and then he said, 'Ah! your riverence, just once more, right through.' 'What,' said the missionary, 'the same chapter?' 'Ay, just the same, sir, but would you spake

it right into my ear? I'm terrible hard o' hearing.' Well, he did so, and when he'd done, 'Oh!' said Tim, 'beautiful, beautiful. It has done me a power o' good! I ha'n't smelt the smell o' Oirish whisky these six weeks!' And the missionary shut up his book and went off."

"I wish you'd shut up your mouth and listen to me," said Nathan irritably.

"Well, well!" she said, "I just thought you'd loike to hear o' Tim."

"It is a fair prospect that I offer," said Nathan; "what say you to it?"

The old woman smoked meditatively for some moments.

"Nathan Groes," said she at last, "if I was sure o' the 'baccy and the dhrop o' the craytur——"

"You shall have it."

"I can't count on Sheena," said she, shaking her head. "Have you spoke your mind to her?"

"Not exactly."

"No — you've danced around her like a horsefly in summer, and it's been a bit teasing. She didn't catch your meaning."

"Do you think she might be brought to care for me?"

"Not wid your face like a lined and scrawled

copy-book. Lie quiet awhile till that be right, and leave it to me."

"Do you think I have a chance with her?"

The old woman blew circles of smoke, and watched them as they sailed up.

"There went one—and it was a wedding ring," she said. "If it had broke—but it didn't. Such an offer as you make isn't to be sneezed at."

"Can you reckon upon Sheena?" persisted Nathan. "To me this is a question of mortal importance, and what is more, it presses. If you cannot be sure that she will have me—well!——" He threw himself from the table, and said angrily, "There are other fish in the sea, and I shall have to take them."

"There be difficulties," said Mrs. O'Grady, removing the pipe from her mouth and looking down into the red glow in the bowl.

"What are these difficulties?"

"Well, now, Mister Groes," said she, "a man may have a sweet pretty face on one side, and when he turns his head round, there's a port-wine mark on the other. And so it is wid most things you look at. They may be well enough one way, but not the other. I laughed when you spoke of Davie Narberth, but Sheena has known him many years, and likes him, it may be as a brother, or it may

be otherways, there is no saying. She has been silent of late, and not as she used to be. And then—he mayn't be tall enough to kiss her, but that don't prevent his wishing he might get at her lips. He has never said a word about his feelings; he's too humble-minded, maybe. But if he finds out that someone else is after her, he may be inclined to put in a word, if not for himself, but to spoil the chances of the other. I don't think he loves you. It isn't as if your character stood high. He may take his brush wid black paint on it and dab it on, and make it appear worse than it be. He may have done that already, and that will explain why she has avoided you. Girls mostly like attention, and the boys running after them, as cats love milk."

"You think he has warned Sheena against me?"

"I can't say, but like enough. If you can't get a dhrop of whisky yourself, you generally begrudge it another."

"Is Shone Evans here often?"

"Is it Shone Evans you mane?"

"I do—Shone Evans, of Rhoson."

"Och! by Gorra, he's been here about twice, and not more at all. If he knows Sheena by sight it is as much as he does know of her. I dare say if he thinks Davie has a liking that

way, he'll put his shoulder to it and help it to roll on. And you may be sure, when he is married, he'll find some place to put Davie into."

Nathan mused, his face became dark.

During the silence that ensued voices could be heard without, and these were of Sheena and David.

Nathan ground his teeth. He started up and drew back into a part of the room that was in shadow, where he could not be seen at once by those entering.

Then arrived Sheena and David, and the latter said: "Granny, I have seen her safe home. The Rebecca boys are about, and it is not well for her to be alone, as night falls. They are clamouring for their leader, and one may be sure that that scoundrel Nathan Groes is not far off."

"He is nearer than you supposed," said Nathan, stepping forward. "Here I am. What have you to say to me?"

"To you—nothing. I would advise Mother O'Grady to bid you leave the house."

"You shall account to me for this."

"I am always ready to settle accounts," said David. "I have dealt with one hound from Ty Gwyn, and I am ready to settle my reckoning with another."

Nathan clenched his fists. His eyes gleamed, and his lips were drawn. He stood irresolute for a moment, and then said sullenly: "I came here, not to hear myself called a scoundrel, but to excuse myself for what may have seemed a scoundrelly act. I never, never purposed to let the dog Tarw fly at Sheena. It was the fox-skins drew him beyond control." Then he turned on his heel, and departed.

CHAPTER XI

"SHOW me what you have got, Sheena," said Mrs. O'Grady; and the girl undid a small bundle and discharged the contents on the table.

The evening had closed in, and the old woman lighted a candle, and deliberately examined the scraps that her granddaughter had procured. She shook her head over them.

"Poor stuff!" she said, "very sorry stuff. Nothing that I want. Drabs, and I must have summer flowers and queen's clothing."

"I could get none other, granny," protested the girl. "I am sure Lady Powell would have given me any bits of silk she had, but there were none."

"Then I shall be obliged to send you into Haverford. You must go to the mercers' and the tailors' for shreds and lavings."

"I will do so, granny."

"I cannot do widout 'em," said the old woman; "look how the coverlet is——" she spread it before her.

"Haverford is a long way off," remarked David.

"Fourteen miles and fifteen hills," said Mrs. O'Grady. "But what is that to young feet and a stout heart?"

"Mother," said David, "what brought Nathan Groes here?"

"Sure, and he told you; it was just to explain about the dog."

"Was that all? I did not suppose he would have dared set his foot on your floor after the annoyance he has caused to Sheena."

"And he's just as much right to clane his slate here as anyone," said the old woman.

"His character is not good. No one has a favourable opinion of him."

"Och!" the grandmother interjected, "isn't that what they said o' Tim?—but whin I married him I found they was all mistook."

"It is supposed—and the events of the night show that it is as supposed—that he is the leader of the Rebecca boys here."

"Small blame to him, Davie, dear. Tim, had he been here—God rest his soul!—would have been the first wid 'em all. And I say, 'Best luck to the Rebecca boys'; as Father Nolan said to Tim, 'If you want to find the straight gate, go against the Government, and you're on it.' It's an aisy road to find."

"I have heard," said David, "that an anonymous letter has been sent to Evan Davies, who keeps the toll-bar on the Solva road, that the daughters of Rebecca intend to pay him a visit, and that he had best clear out."

"And has he done so?"

"I saw him shifting his sticks of furniture to-day, and his wife carrying the baby with the cradle strapped to her back."

"That's business," said Mrs. O'Grady. "Och, honey, tak' down the fiddle and give us 'Bould Brennan on the Moor.' Thim was the times for goin' down, and your Rebecca boys be poor crayters beside the such as Brennan"; and she sang with her cracked voice :—

"It's of a fearless highwayman
A story I will tell,
His name was Willy Brennan,
In Oireland he did dwell.
'Twas on the Limerick Mountains
He made his wild career,
And many wealthy gintlemen
Before 'im stood in fear.
O Brennan on the moor!
Brennan on the moor!
Bould and undaunted stood
Brennan on the moor!"

To humour the old woman David complied, but he did not accompany her through the

entire song, consisting of some ten verses, for her voice failed her when she came to the meeting of Brennan and the Mayor of Clonmel.

"The mayor, he knew his features;
'I think, young man,' said he,
'You must be Willy Brennan,
So come along wid me.'"

Then he passed away from the Irish melody, and through changes shifted to the Welsh tune of "Ar hyd y nos!" and as he lightly played, Sheena took up the words and sang them.

Suddenly he drew the bow across the strings, making them jar, and started up.

"I must not stay," said he, pressed Sheena's hand, with a look up into her brown eyes, and left the cottage.

He strode away in a dream, the music as an atmosphere accompanying him.

Presently David came to a fork in the ways. The short winter day had ended, and he stood for a few moments irresolute. Should he go home, taking the right-hand turn, or that to the left, which would conduct him to the town and to the Solva road, where stood the toll-gate the Rebeccaites purposed demolishing?

Home was hardly such to him. Home is not where one eats and drinks and sleeps, but where one's spirit dwells, and with David that

was the cottage on the Waun, where was the violin to which he communicated all that was in his heart. At Rhoson his step-father never showed him kindness, though never actually harsh towards him. John he believed to be still at Ty Gwyn.

David was not one to care to spend his evening at a public-house smoking, drinking, card-playing, though not averse from such a relaxation when taken occasionally. But he was short of cash now. Old Mr. Evans never remembered to supply him with money, and he shrank from reminding John that his pocket was empty. He was half inclined to see what took place at the turnpike; though he would lend no hand to the work of destruction. He sympathised with those who wrecked the gates so far as to admit that these gates were a severe provocation.

The burden was great at St. David's, and was felt to be almost intolerable. In this treeless district there was little fuel. The turf was indifferent—the skimming of the moor, not the deep, rich peat of a bog. Consequently farmers and tradespeople alike depended on coal, and this was drawn from the port of Solva four miles distant.

The road from the harbour made a steep ascent, and a cart could not convey a heavy

load. Every load was taxed at the gate before it entered St. David's. The cost of transport by boat and cart, of unlading, was now increased by the charge at the pike.

Moreover, St. David's was not a place with a neighbourhood. The only market was Haverford, fourteen miles away; there were four gates, but two tolls that had to be paid between it and St. David's. Yet all the cattle sent to market, all the produce of the farms, must go to Haverford. At no other place could they be disposed of. The farmer going to market could hardly expect to return the same day, so that not only had he to pay for his lodging at the market town for the night, but also fresh tolls the next day. He had been handicapped before the setting up of the gates.

Then, further, formerly the keeping up of the roads had been done by the resident farmers at their convenience, when, in winter, they had not much work for their horses and men on the farm. Now they had to maintain men and horses in comparative inactivity during the winter months, and pay as well for the roads, by putting their hands into their pockets every time they passed over them.

Those mainly hit by the erection of the pikes were too cautious themselves to take part in acts of violence such as were being

perpetrated throughout the county. The Rebeccaites were youths acting out of pure wantonness and love of mischief. The shrewd farmers foresaw that the demolitions would be of no permanent benefit to them. The toll-houses would be repaired, and the cost of repairing them would fall upon them. The wreckers, moreover, if caught, would be dealt with severely.

If any farmers' sons were among the rioters, they were the wild blades who would not be controlled at home.

Which road should David take? He remained undecided in mind for full ten minutes. The chime of "Ar hyd y nos!" had been in his heart. But now, as a rush of wind, came over him the rollicking, defiant melody of "Brennan on the Moor," thrilling him with the love of adventure and of lawlessness.

At the same time he heard the blast of a cow-horn, and knew that the Rebeccaites were on the march. He took the road to the left, and hastened forward.

On entering the main street of St. David's, —there are but two—he saw that the whole place was in commotion. Everyone had turned out: women were at their doors laughing at the strange figures cut by the daughters of Rebecca; men were pressing drink on them,

and much mirth was caused by their efforts to imbibe the liquor without lifting their veils to disclose their features.

Boys carried lanterns, and a pair of stalwart youths bore aloft the bar from the road to Porth Liski, that had been carried off, and with a red kerchief fastened to it served as a standard.

Some urchins provided with Jew's harps twanged them.

As David joined the throng, he asked a man, a butcher of the place, what had been done at the Porth Liski gate.

"Why," said he, "they took the pole away, stove in the door and windows, and rammed the pole through the roof till they had riddled it like a pepper caster. And now they are marching to serve the gate on the Solva road in the same manner."

"Was the gatekeeper at the pike they have wrecked?" asked a woman.

"Oh no! he had notice, and had gone."

"Are they purposing to smash the gate on the Fishguard road to-night?" inquired David.

"No," answered the butcher; "Peter Sturgis is tough. He has no wife or child, and he says that he lit his pipe with the notice sent him, and does not intend to budge. He is answerable for the gate, and will stick to it."

"Ay," threw in a woman, "he told Mistress Jenkyns that he had a blunderbuss, and would make Rebecca taste his slug-soup if she paid him a visit."

"He will do it," said the butcher. "Peter is not one to be frightened from his post by a parcel of beardless boys."

"That is Jimmy Jones," whispered one lad to another. "He pulled up his skirts, and I saw a patch on his trousers that mother sewed in."

"And I know that other," observed a second lad. "He is wearing sister Bessie's cap and shawl. I heard him whispering to her—and I am sure it was to borrow the garments."

"On!" shouted a stentorian voice, and the horn responded with a hideous bray.

At once the whole set of disguised men started, not in order, not marching in ranks, but straggling on as they listed, along the street leading into the Solva road. Behind them capered, whistled, and laughed a train of boys.

But the men of substance, the shopkeepers and householders, with few exceptions remained behind at their doors till all had disappeared, and then adjourned to the inn for a glass.

They were willing enough that a demonstration of the popular opinion should be made,

but were not inclined themselves to become participators.

The gang of rioters swept on to the spot beyond the Grove Inn where stood the gate, and at once began operations against it.

The pike-house had been abandoned, and most, though not all, of its contents had been carried off. Accordingly the work of destruction proceeded apace without opposition.

The boys threw stones at the windows, and the panes were shivered to atoms in a minute. The gate was hacked to chips. The house door was forced open; and as this particular toll-house was specially obnoxious, the mob proceeded to entirely demolish it. The habitation of the toll-taker was of stone. To pull it down would have entailed much labour and considerable time. Those who broke into it collected what wood was available. They tore up the planks, found an old chair with three legs that had been abandoned, ripped up the stairs, and finding a bedstead in the room above that had not been removed, with a mattress upon it, proceeded to hack it to pieces, and threw down the straw into the room below. Thorns were plucked from the hedges, and a pile was made. It ignited slowly, but presently gained force, and the glare shot forth through the shattered windows and doors.

The table of tolls had been plucked down, and was cast in on the blazing heap. The flames rushed up, and ignited the rafters and beams. The authors of the mischief gave themselves up to frantic merriment. As the house stood against walled fields, they could not form a ring and dance round it, as it blazed; but first they joined hands and capered from side to side in a swaying chain, singing, then broke into couples, each boy with a disguised sister, and whirled about on the road, the light flaring on them and making strange shadows.

Suddenly David Narberth was conscious of a blow dealt him from behind, followed by a sharp pang. He uttered an exclamation, staggered a few steps, and fell in a pool of blood. He had been stabbed in the back.

CHAPTER XII

"THERE'S a man down!" shouted a young fellow, who had been standing beside David when he fell.

"Well," said another, "if he has lost his legs, let him find them. I have not run off with them."

"Who is it?" inquired a third; and then—"What's the matter with him?"

"Had a drop too much," explained one.

"He's more like got a drop too little," said the first.

"Stand back, let the light on him. There is something running from him. Good Lord! It is blood."

"Blood! his nose has been bleeding."

"Open a way there! Let the firelight on to him."

The dancers, the mad, mischievous crowd parted, and a gush of yellow light poured out of the door of the burning cottage over the road.

Those forming the mob could, however, hardly be restrained in their curiosity from

pressing forward and shutting off the light. But with a crash the roof fell in and sent up a spurt of fire and sparks like a volcano, and in the flare everything could be seen distinctly.

A man stooping over the fallen David started up, and shouted in a tone of dismay: "He is bleeding badly—it is David Narberth!"

"Some of you run for a hurdle," said the butcher, drawing nigh. He had been standing at a distance. "That is blood, sure enough, it is in a pool about him. Quick! help me to raise him."

Several men ran for a gate, unhinged and brought it.

"He is dead!" said one.

"No—it is a faint."

"Who can have done this?"

"Where is the turnpike-keeper? Anyone seen him? He may have sought to revenge himself."

"Pshaw! David was not a daughter of Rebecca."

"The man is not here. He took his wife and child to Mrs. Jervis's."

"Gently," said the butcher; "he is bleeding like an ox."

One young fellow pulled off his coat, made it up into a roll, and put it under David's head, as he was placed on the gate.

"Who can have done it?" was asked by several voices.

"We'll look for him at another time," said the butcher. "We must have Davie Narberth to Surgeon Jones at once. Here, boys, carry him gently as you can."

It was remarkable how that, now that the riot had assumed a grave aspect, the young men dressed in women's clothes vanished from the scene. Only such remained as had followed in the capacity of spectators, taking no part in the destruction. Slowly the procession moved to the town. A boy with a lantern led the way, and a rabble of urchins followed; the noise was hushed. They whispered questions, offered guesses; the pole turned into an extemporised banner was flung over a hedge, the standard-bearer decamped. The horn-blower was seen no more. He also had run away.

When the first house was reached a woman ran out to ask what was the matter.

When informed—"Ah!" said she, "I knew that no good would come of this mumming. Better to pay the tolls than shed blood. I'm glad my son is not in it."

The surgeon's house was at the east end of the town. He was an old-fashioned practitioner. The neighbourhood was peculiarly healthy; it was thinly populated, and the district limited on

three sides by the sea, so that it was not a desirable locality for a medical man to settle in. He could not expect to do more than pick up a precarious existence, and be thankful to do even that. Consequently it was not a place to which would come a young man ambitious of advance in his profession. It was a backwater into which drifted such as had means of their own, and were not dependent on their practice, or such as had an infirmity, which made it desirable for them to find a retreat till the infirmity had been overcome, or the infirmity had triumphed over them.

Such was Surgeon Recab Jones: a good companion, a man who could tell a humorous story, and who dearly loved the bottle. He knew his business, however, but it was said of him that to perform a skilful operation it was advisable that he should be primed with spirits —in fact be on the borderland of intoxication.

Times have vastly changed since Recab Jones had set up in St. David's. Then it was a place rarely visited, where a few canons and a dean droned out a profitless life in the vale of the Alun; the town above on the high ground was occupied by a few tradesmen who did very little trade, and a few labourers who did not greatly exert themselves in labour. People lived there on very little, and troubled them-

selves not at all with anything that went on outside Dewisland.

Now all is altered. St. David's draws to it numerous visitors in spring and summer, it attracts residents. Consequently a very different type of medical man can live there now from Surgeon Jones at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Mr. Jones at once stripped David, examined his wound, and stanched the flow of blood. David had been stabbed from behind, with a down stroke of a sharp blade that had cut through coat and vest, and had penetrated deeply, happily just missing a vital organ.

The surgeon gave instructions. A mattress was placed on the gate; and he ordered that he should be conveyed slowly and carefully to Rhoson.

He would follow, and properly deal with him when he had been put to bed.

Having seen the bearers start with their load, he braced himself for his work, and in a quarter of an hour was at his best.

"Who can have done it?" asked Mr. Jones over his whisky and water. "Accident it was not. That is out of the question. There is not a soul in Dewisland but likes little Davie, a fellow who never hurt a fly—except—what was that story I heard of his strangling a

dog? How stands the weather-glass? Falling. I cannot manage my instruments with cold and wet fingers. I want water-proofing—internally." He filled himself another tumbler, drank it off, and said, as he screwed his lips together, "Whoever struck Davie meant mischief. That was a blow dealt with full force; only the buckle of his waistcoat saved him, by turning the point. A cowardly blow. A dastardly act. Didn't think we had in Dewisland a man capable of doing it. Well, I must be off"—then to his whisky flask—"Au revoir!"

When Mr. Jones arrived at Rhoson, he found the farmer in considerable excitement. His house was not suitable to be turned into a hospital. His housekeeper had enough to do in cooking his meals and attending to him without being turned into a nurse. The maid had her daily duties—milking, scouring out the pans, and churning.

Old John Evans was not an unkind man, but he was selfish. David he had never liked. He had looked on him as an incumbrance; he resented on him the humiliations he had undergone in the bitter years when he had been married to Davie's mother.

"Very well," said Mr. Jones, when he had listened to John Evans's grumbles, "you must provide someone to attend to the patient."

"Provide a nurse!" exclaimed the farmer; "one cannot expect to get one for love."

"As you have no love to disburse, that does not matter; you will be obliged to get one for money."

"What, pay one, and keep her as well! Eating like a cormorant, and always asking for the best, and wanting sustaining drops of cordial. Don't like it."

"Whether you like it or not, you must get one."

The old man rubbed his chin, then his lips, looked out of his cunning eyes at the surgeon, and said: "Suppose I say that I will not. David's father did not leave a penny for his maintenance."

"Now look me in the face, Mr. Evans," retorted Mr. Jones.

"I am looking, and observing how red your nose is. You don't want a ruby lamp hung out upon your shop to show there's a sawbones within."

"Mr. Evans," said the surgeon, ignoring the personality of the remark, "that boy Davie is valued by everyone in Dewisland. Everyone knows that he is a worthy, honourable lad, strong as a horse, and you work him as a slave. You would not find an ordinary man to do all that you put upon him, and that he takes on

himself. He never complains, but all St. David's cries shame on you. Let me tell you, Mr. Evans, that if you let him slip through—and there is no reason why he should do so—there will not be a house I go into that I shall not proclaim you in as guilty of his death, through your chariness of spending some of your grubby money on him. Dock me of my liquor, set me to drink Nonn's Well water if I do not."

"Who said I was going to neglect him?" asked the farmer peevishly. "I pointed out that there were difficulties, that is all. I will do my duty by him—that is what you would call duty, but I do not. I owe him nothing. He has cost me a lot of money since his mother brought him here."

"Of course you will, and you'll have the lad cheap in the end."

The old man looked stonily into the fire, with a hand on each knee.

"Who is to nurse him?" he asked. "Don't go and proclaim it on the housetops that I begrudged him a nurse. What I said was that neither my housekeeper nor maid can attend to him; each has her respective work that cannot be neglected. As for myself, I never had any experience in the sick-room. If I were a woman now it would be different."

"And a precious dry nurse you'd make. You will have to find a woman. Excuse me," said the doctor, "you have a bottle by you—barley-water, I believe; allow me to wet my lips, it helps consideration. I should say that Granny O'Grady or her granddaughter, Sheena Lewis, might do. The latter I should prefer, the former is too old. They are poor as rats, and would be thankful to be given the job!"

"Don't like 'em," said old John Evans. "If poor, they may be light-fingered."

"And the rich have their fingers tight enough about the money-bags."

"Don't like the woman—she's Irish."

"Then find another yourself. David will become feverish and light-headed. The nurse you select will have to watch him by night and by day. I think that Sheena Lewis is the girl for you; Davie knows her and the grandmother well, as he fiddles in their cottage."

"I cannot stand the squealing here."

"Davie plays beautifully. He could earn his livelihood with his instrument any day. If he studied his own interests instead of yours, he would shake the dust of his feet off against Rhoson, and go to London. There he would be welcomed, and earn—just what money he chose to ask."

"You say so?"

"Sure of it, at the opera."

"A theatre! I don't approve of theatres."

"Not if they draw away a man from you who works for his bread and cheese and gets no wage. Conscience is a mighty convenient horse when saddled with advantage. Some men follow their consciences as a man does a wheelbarrow, by shoving it before him. I'll put Davie in the way to make his money. When I was in London I knew a man connected with the orchestra at Drury Lane, and he'll be ready enough to help on a Welshman."

John Evans fidgeted on his seat, as though he were sitting on a hot coal. Then he thrust the bottle towards the doctor, and said, "Take a drop. I love Davie next to my own soul. It would break my heart to lose him."

"You mean that it would wring your heart to have to pay for another man to do his work."

"You won't be so foolish as to suggest to him that he should go to London—to a theatre. You might ruin his soul."

"As to his soul, much you care about that; you mean it might bleed your pocket. No, I will not do it, if you treat him properly. You are a screw, Mr. Evans, and a rusty screw, and

not a drop of oil has been put on you. Do your best for the lad, and he will be grateful. Call it conscience or call it purse, which you will, look into either—and act as you see advisable. Now is your chance. Let him see that you value him, and are doing your best for him, and he will repay it with love and obedience. He will be worth the cost of the nurse and my bill a dozen times over."

"Well, I was joking," said the old man. "Take another drop. Don't be bashful. You haven't covered the bottom of the glass. My conscience——"

"Oh yes—display that, as you do your Sunday waistcoat, and keep the canvas behind, under the coat, where none can see."

"I was going to say," said the farmer, "when you return to St. David's, you may make a little round, to oblige me, and call at the cottage on Dowrog Waun, and settle with the old woman to send her granddaughter here. I will give six shillings a week—the Sabbath I do not pay for, that is thrown in."

"As you will," said the surgeon, "and now —just a drop more—and I will go upstairs and overhaul David. When I leave, I will go to Mrs. O'Grady and make the arrangements and send the girl here at once. The old woman won't do, at all events now. She might sleep,

and the lad is in danger. But trust me, I will pull him through."

"I will pay your bill," said John Evans, senior. "But mind, six, not seven, shillings a week."

John Evans the younger arrived at Rhoson an hour later. After leaving Ty Gwyn he had not returned home at once, as he had a commission from his father to execute at a farm at a little distance. On his way back he learned that something had happened, and he was in the utmost alarm. He entered in great haste and heat, having run since he was aware that Davie had met with an accident, and he at once questioned his father, who told him the particulars as far as he knew them.

"And, Shone," said the old man, "I am not the man to hesitate about doing the right thing in the right way. Davie is not my flesh and blood, and I am in no way bound to him; but he shall be properly attended to. Dr. Jones shall visit him and send medicines; I shall pay for both visits and bottles of mess. And as to the nursing, I have sent for Sheena Lewis to attend to Davie, at six shillings a week and her keep. What do you say to that, Shone?"

"Sheena!" gasped young John — "Sheena here!"

"Yes, Sheena Lewis; have you anything to

say against this? I have considered the matter, and think it best."

Shone made no reply. He kicked off his boots, and silently ascended the stairs to the sick-room, but halted with his hand on the door. His face was troubled:—"Sheena here!—in this house, where I shall meet her continually!" Then he put his hand to the door, but halted, and did not enter. "God help me!" he said to himself; and turning, descended the stair he had but just mounted.

CHAPTER XIII

"WHAT! gone to sleep?" asked the father querulously. John was standing at the table, the knuckles of his right hand resting on the board, his left hand thrust into his vest. His head was bowed.

"No, father, I was thinking."

"Thought without action is blank cartridge," retorted the elder John. "What are you thinking about?"

"Father, I was considering whether it would not be better to get someone else to nurse Davie, and not that old woman, Mrs. O'Grady."

"Well!"

"She is too old and loquacious to make a suitable attendant on him."

"But the girl is young, and I suppose can tie up her tongue."

"She is too young."

"Bah! we must take whom we can get. The girl is coming, not the grandmother."

"For how long will she be here?"

"Can't say—not for the life of me—maybe over Christmas."

"And she will be here every day?"

"Of course, and all night as well. I shall have to feed and pay her. It will be a terrible expense, and I'm sorry for you, Shone; I really am sorry for you. I knew you would feel it."

"I, father!" John looked up with a startled expression.

"Yes; it will make havoc of my little savings, that you would have inherited when I am no more. But after all, Shone, there is a Providence above us, and I have learned a beautiful lesson of trust by to-day's events."

"Yes, it might have been worse."

"It would have been bad, very bad, if it had happened at haysel; but chancing now in the slack time of the year, it makes one lift one's heart. However, Shone, you will have to work doubly hard to meet the burden of this illness."

"I—I was thinking of going to Ramsey to see how things are getting on there under Rob."

"You must put that off. You will be required here."

John stooped, and as he began to put on his boots again he said: "Let me go into the town and endeavour to procure another nurse, instead of Sheena Lewis."

"Nonsense. The thing is settled. Doctor Jones has arranged it all. By this time he will have made a bargain with them. Six shillings a week, Sunday included. I dare say anyone else would ask seven." The old man sighed. "To think that I with my grey hairs should be pinched like this."

John the younger sighed as well, a sigh expressive of more trouble than that to which his father gave vent. Then without another word he remounted the stairs in his stocking soles to the room of his half-brother.

David was awake, and he smiled and held out his hand as John entered. Shone grasped it warmly.

"Oh, Davie!" said he, "this is a shocking business, and it is not over yet. There is more trouble coming."

"Don't say that, Shone. Why should you think it?"

John did not reply.

"The doctor will pull me through," said Davie.

"Yes, I doubt not that. It would be too horrible to think otherwise. My God, dear old fellow, what should I do without you? I did not mean that. It was something else that weighed on me."

"What was it?"

"Davie," said John, without answering the question, and speaking quickly with a flush on his face, "how came this about?"

"I can tell you no more than what others can."

"But who did it?"

"I do not know. I did not see who struck me."

"Davie, it was done on purpose, and out of desperate, devilish wickedness. Can it have been——? But, no, he would not do such a thing merely because you had strangled Tarw, and the dog was not his property. Yet I can think of no one else in all Dewisland who could owe you a grudge. I would have sworn you had not an enemy on earth."

"If you mean Nathan, brother—I did not see him. It was dark, but then, there was a flicker from the fire. I am sure he was not in his steeple hat and red cloak dancing with the Rebecca crew."

"The cloak I took back to the woman, who"—his face grew darker with trouble—"who denied that it was hers; and the hat was trampled out of shape. Davie, do you think he did it out of revenge against me, because I scarred his face?"

"But he struck me, not you."

"He knew perhaps that a blow dealt you would wound me deeper than my dear Davie."

"I do not think it, Shone," said the deformed youth; "I suppose that none know as I do how you love me."

"Did you see him at all?"

"I cannot say — I did not observe him. There were a good many looking on; all I can assert is that he was not with the Rebeccaites."

"No; when I was at Ty Gwyn he was there, scowling at me from over a wall, with his pipe in his mouth. And then, just now as I was coming here, I am confident I saw him again; he was in the lane, and I came suddenly on him. It was dark, and I did not see his face, but I know his height and his build. And he started as I came up, and went through a gate that led nowhere save into a field that is not the property of Mrs. Bowen. That looks as though he had a guilty conscience, and it shows that he has been hanging about."

"He has been at Mrs. O'Grady's cottage."

"Indeed! for what purpose?"

"To explain to Sheena that he did not purposely let Tarw loose on her."

"But he did! I know he did!" said John

vehemently. "The chain was not broken. When was he at the cottage?"

"Just before I left."

"When did you leave?"

"I went away—and heard the horn blowing, and so I walked on to see the fun."

"He may have followed you."

"I did not see him at the wrecking of the toll-house. I was looking at the fire and those who were dancing."

"Had they their leader?"

"Not the same leader as before."

"I believe Nathan did it. I am sure he did," said John, and fell into a study.

Presently he said abruptly: "Davie, do you know who is coming to nurse you?"

"No, Shone."

"Sheena."

A flush of pleasure came into David's eyes: "Oh, Shone, I am so glad!"

"I had rather not have her here," said John in a low tone.

"But why not?"

"She—she is inexperienced."

"Oh, Shone, she will do her very best. She is so thoughtful, so unselfish, so kind!"

"Father has taken it into his head to send for her. Davie, dear old fellow, the boy or I will be with you in the morning and evening

to attend to you, whilst she goes out for a breath of fresh air, but—Davie, do not think it unkind of me if I am not here to see you during the rest of the day. Do not suppose that you are out of my thoughts. It will be because—because"—he hesitated, turned his face aside, and said—"because I shall have to work desperately hard to make up for your being ill. Father has impressed that on me. I will run up and see you when Sheena has left."

"I am sorry, Shone, to give you this trouble. When I am recovered I will do your work as well as my own."

Then a fit of coughing came on, and to his alarm John saw blood on his brother's lips.

"Oh, Davie!" he exclaimed in self-reproach, "I have made you talk, and have worried you with questions. I will speak no more. Hush! I hear the doctor's voice below."

"And Sheena is with him," said David.

John descended from the sick-room, and found Mr. Jones and Mrs. O'Grady and her granddaughter in the room beneath. He took Sheena's hand, and felt that it trembled.

"It is kind of you to come," he said. "Poor Davie has been badly hurt."

She said nothing, but withdrew her fingers from his grasp.

"He has been so good to us," explained Mrs. O'Grady, "that we could do no other, sure."

"For six shillings a week," threw in the farmer. "Helps gratitude to go on six wheels."

"He sent us a load of turf when we were without fire," pursued the old woman.

"Mr. John did that," was Sheena's correction.

"Yes, I did," said the farmer, taking the merit to himself. "And in consideration of that I thought you might have put it at five shillings a week."

"Never mind about the turf," said the surgeon. "Shone Evans, please to lead the way with a candle; I will follow as soon as I have had a talk with your father."

John mounted the steps, turning repeatedly to see that the girl and her grandmother were following. The staircase was dark and narrow.

The two women were admitted into the sick-room by John.

It was a mean apartment, with a lean-to roof that was plastered against the slates: a room bitterly cold in the winter, and glowing hot in summer. It had no fireplace in it. The furniture was of the poorest description and scanty. The plain wooden bed was covered with a patch-

work quilt, one that had been made to order by Mrs. O'Grady, and paid for in instalments with difficulty and through self-denial by David. There was but a single wooden chair in the room, a box held David's clothes, there was no chest of drawers, and the sill of the window served as dressing-table and wash-hand stand.

A few rude prints, portraits of celebrated musicians, were nailed to the whitewashed walls, and above the bed was a coarse coloured print of the Crucifixion that had been given to David by Mrs. O'Grady.

John had not hitherto considered how shabby were the fittings of his half-brother's room, very different from those of his own. But he noticed them now, with a sense of shame and self-reproach that he had not cared more for the comforts of his misshapen brother, whom he had loved, loved sincerely, but in a protecting, patronising manner. He himself was the heir to Rhoson, the true son of the house, and David was there out of charity.

The moment Sheena entered she hastened to the bedside, seated herself by David, and burst into tears. "Oh! Davie," she said through her sobs, "if I had been there, the wicked fellow should have driven his knife through me before he reached you."

"Sure, and he'd have tasted my nails," said

Mrs. O'Grady; "my teeth have come out, but my nails have grown."

"You must not make him talk," interposed John; "I have been inconsiderate in doing this, and he has coughed blood."

"No, Davie," said Sheena, "you shall not speak, but I will watch you. Granny will be here now and then, but I shall be at your side nursing you all the night, and most of the day."

David's burning eyes rested on Sheena. He put out his hand and took hers; his was hot with fever, that had already set in. It seemed as though David could not withdraw his eyes from the girl.

John moved uneasily in the room, looked out of the window into the ink-black night, looked at his half-brother, whose cheeks were flaming, then at Sheena, and wiped great drops from his brow.

"I shall be away to-morrow, Davie," said the girl, "but granny will take my place. I am obliged to go into Haverford. But I shall be back at night."

"How so?" exclaimed John, turning sharply about. "You are going into Haverford?"

"Yes," replied Sheena, but without looking at him; "I must go thither to get some silks and brocades for the patchwork."

"And it's the coverlet I have to make," said Mrs. O'Grady. "It's an illigant coverlet too, that has been commanded by Mr. Roche, and to complate it to my fancy I must have some gay remnants. Poor folk live through their fingers. Babes begin by sucking them—and that's to show whence they will get their food in time to come. I can't finish the quilt without silks. There is none to be had nearer than the mercers' at Haverford."

"But," protested John, "it entails a walk of thirty miles in all, there and back to Rhoson. She cannot do it."

"Och! but do it she must."

"If she does," persisted John, "she will be quite incapable of attending to my brother at night. It is he I am considering. She will be so tired that she will sleep and neglect him."

"You need not fear that," said Sheena; "Davie knows better. If I undertake a thing, I do it."

David, who held her hand, pressed it and smiled. John winced at the implication.

"I will go into Haverford myself to-morrow," said he, "and I will execute Mrs. O'Grady's commissions."

"It won't do at all at all," said the grandmother; "you know nothing of the colours

and the qualities I want. Sheena must go. She is strong and healthy, and can walk it."

The surgeon entered the room.

"Halloo!" said he, "quite comfortable here—on the best terms. I did not quite reckon on this when I chose the nurse."

He had noticed Sheena's hand in that of David. The girl coloured and released her fingers.

"Nay, nay," said Mr. Jones, "it will do him good. Don't let go because of me. If you understand each other, so much the better."

"Sir-r!" protested the grandmother, "it's just misthaken you are. They're as brother and sister, and nothing beyond. Davie learned to play the violin of my son—God rest his sowl!—and he has fiddled in my house for years, and mighty welcome the boy has been!"

"You hold your tongue," ordered the surgeon; "you will drive the lad into delirium with your prate."

"Sure it was yourself as began it."

"Well, and myself shall stop it and snip the end off your tongue. Go below. I must give directions to your granddaughter, without you here to punctuate my sentences and disturb my periods. Bless my soul! there are five persons in this stuffy hole!"

He went to the window and threw open the casement.

"There, Sheena," said he, "fresh air will do the patient no harm. You, Shone Evans, topple the old woman head-foremost down-stairs."

CHAPTER XIV

SHONE EVANS could not sleep that night. He turned from side to side. Never had his bed been so hard, nor his pillow so lumpy. His brain was in a quiver. Thoughts came up like the quills in a harpsichord and twanged fibres—that all jarred.

Who had stabbed Davie? Was it Nathan? But was there motive for such an act—motive sufficient to urge him to seek the poor deformed lad's life?

Davie had not injured him. Nathan, as John knew, had received notice to leave Ty Gwyn, but in no possible way could he connect Davie with this.

He, John, had chastised Nathan and had slashed his face, but that would prompt him to revenge himself not on the inoffensive Davie, but on the offender.

Then he recalled how Nathan had struck Davie on the face as he stood in the door of the cottage on the Waun, and he felt that this fellow must bear a grudge against the

deformed lad, the cause of which was unknown to him, and was probably as unknown to David.

Then in the next place another chord sounded. In what relation did Davie stand to Sheena? Was there sincere affection linking them closer and warmer than fraternal regard? Something deeper and more tender than he had supposed possible?

David had never hinted as much to him; he had represented his visits to the cottage as prompted by desire to perform there on the violin he had been taught to play by Sheena's father, and on which he was not suffered to practise at Rhoson.

Besides, David—one so shapeless, it seemed incongruous to imagine him as a lover, as capable of loving, and impossible to suppose that a girl would feel real love for such as he.

But David had brightened up and looked happy when told that Sheena was to be his nurse. That, however, was natural and explicable; he had seen her and known her so long. And yet—yet—how he had fixed his eyes on her and held her hand!

Then up came another thought—that of his own engagement to Dinah. He loved her; of course he loved her, for he was about to be united to her for life. Did she love him?

That was a question he had never been able to answer. He had not hitherto considered it seriously. Sometimes he satisfied himself that she did; at others it appeared to him as though she shrank from him; a barrier, indefinable, yet ever present, stood between them. They might clasp hands, their lips might meet, but their souls had not intermingled. That which he loved in her was her good looks. Of her inner self he knew nothing. The blind was drawn down over her eyes, and he had not fathomed them, seen through into her mind, her soul, her heart. If he had attempted to draw forth her thoughts, her deepest feelings, he had been baffled.

When she exhibited affection there was something hollow in it; when she was cheerful her gaiety was forced. The only glow about her was external; it was not the uprush of inner fires. The evening sun suffused Carn Llidi, when wrapped in snow, with a blaze of crimson, but there was colour, not warmth, there. It did not thaw the snow, and next moment a dead grey was on the mountain.

He must make the best of it. He was conscious now that he had rushed, or been pushed, into his engagement without sufficient thought. He had not proved his heart to ascertain if real love were there. He had not

known what to look for—what real love was. He had yielded to a passing fancy and to the persuasion of his father, and perhaps a little to ambition.

He had been a pawn in his father's hands, moved about in a game that had not particularly interested him.

He sat up in bed.

There was a moon in the sky, but it was behind clouds. The window formed a steely patch in the black wall. He took his pillow, turned and beat it, placed it in a more convenient position, and laid his head on it again. At five o'clock Mrs. O'Grady would be at the house door to relieve Sheena and start her on her walk.

It seemed to Shone heartless to be lying in his room seeking sleep whilst his poor brother was in pain and fever, and a stranger was watching by his bed.

How could he sleep without knowing whether Davie progressed through the night? What if something were required and Sheena did not know where it was to be found? What if Sheena had fallen asleep, and an access of delirium had come on Davie, and he had torn off his bandages and was bleeding—bleeding to death?

The notion so tormented and terrified John

that he rose, drew on his garments, and stole shoeless from his room. A passage led to the sick-chamber. He could see a feeble strip of light below the door. A rush candle was burning within.

He stepped lightly along the corridor, and softly opened the door and entered.

A faint yellow glow filled the room, and wavelets of light rippled on the ceiling. The candle had been placed in a pan of water. It burned dully, and had a long red wick. By its light John could see the bed with his brother in it, and beside it, with her back to the window and with her hands on her lap, sat Sheena still as a statue.

She was not asleep. The eyes that looked at him as he entered were very large, darker than any spot in the room, and yet with no real gloom in them.

John said not a word, but bent over the bed and looked at Davie. Sheena's eyes were on him, and she saw how full of love, pity, pain was his face, and by the set of the lips she could be sure that he had to exercise violence to control his tears.

Davie was asleep, with his face turned to the wall; his breath came quick and was hot, and there was a flush on his cheek and brow where not covered by a bandage.

A scent of vinegar pervaded the little, narrow, low room.

Presently John raised himself. He had satisfied himself that his brother was doing well, that the nurse was awake and attentive.

He did not, however, look at Sheena. He said to her not a word, but went back, quietly as he had come, to his own room.

He cast himself, clothed as he was, upon the bed. He was at ease as to the condition of David, and might sleep. Yet sleep he could not.

A patient, silent figure fixed itself on his mind's eye, sitting in the sick-room, hour after hour, motionless, save when she rose to renew the bandages or moisten the parched lips. What must it be to spend an entire night thus!

To John it appeared insupportable. He was himself incapable of remaining inactive; his feet, his hands must be engaged.

Against the glass panes of the window that reflected the light from the rush candle, and was yet silvery with the dulled moonlight without, he had seen a dark head, that of the watcher, neat, small, and in it two such eyes—eyes that filled the whole face, eyes that, like drops of phosphorus, burnt into the soul, inextinguishable.

John had never seen such eyes, certainly had never felt them hitherto. Dinah had fine eyes, but—but—they had never scorched, pierced, followed him.

"Good heavens!" ejaculated John, "and after a night's watch she has to walk into Haverford, do her shopping there, and return! Thirty miles—it is thirty-four from Rhoson. And after that to be here again to-morrow night, and keep awake! It is impossible. She cannot do it, it will kill her—I mean, it won't do for Davie."

He turned himself impatiently on his bed, and cast the coverlet from him.

"I would drive her in and out if I might," said he. "But I cannot be spared from the farm. Father would not hear of it if I proposed it. I will sit up myself to-morrow night with Davie, and the poor girl shall have a night's rest at home. I dare not risk it—for David's sake. He will be more feverish to-morrow."

He was restless again. He heard the clock strike, but did not count the strokes; yet he wanted to know how the hours sped. He must wait till the next time the works gave a premonitory whirr before he knew the time. He had resolved to let Mrs. O'Grady in when she arrived.

"She will take about five hours walking into Haverford, and as many returning," mused he. "It is a hard journey for a horse—what must it be for a girl! A horse is put into a stable and allowed its rest, but she will have to be going from one mercer to another. Without a word to father, or to anyone, I will put the cob into the trap in the evening, and drive to meet her. It would not be fitting that she should travel the road in the dark of night."

Shortly before five o'clock he heard a tap at the house door, and springing from his bed, he descended the stair and opened.

"Is that you, Mother O'Grady?"

"Sure, but it is myself," replied the woman.

"Stay; I will strike a light," said John; but Sheena, who had heard the door unbarred, descended, and received her grandmother and conducted the old woman to the sick-room.

John remained below. Presently the girl returned, with a shawl over her head, ready to start on her journey.

John opened the door for her to pass, and then followed her outside. Sheena turned about in some surprise.

"Stay a moment," said he; "I desire a word with you that will not keep. You have a long trudge before you. When you reach Haverford, have you money for the silk and

satins you are commissioned to get—and also for your dinner?"

"Oh, Mr. John, I shall beg the scraps!"

"But you will not obtain a sufficiency. I am ordering a coverlet of your mother, of the very best—as a present for her who will soon be my wife. It must be of the very best, and very rich and gay. Your grandmother shall make it."

"I hope to get many little bits at the shops, odds and ends, and faded scraps that can be turned."

"I will have no discoloured patches on the quilt I order for my Dinah. Then, about your dinner. You will be hungry when you reach Haverford."

"I have some coin with me."

"Some—but not enough. If you have a chance of a lift, take it. The mail-cart leaves St. David's at seven."

"I cannot go in that."

"Why not?"

"It would cost three shillings."

"You shall have the money, and I insist that you go in it. It will not do for you to be tired out, for David's sake. With the best wishes you might fail to keep awake, and the consequences might be serious. Here, Sheena, take my purse. Spend what you find neces-

sary. Take a lift in the mail-cart, have a good meal when you reach town, and buy as smart a lot of scraps as you can find. I will take no refusal. I am considering my brother's welfare and Dinah's pleasure."

"I cannot do it."

"I insist. Why, good heavens! you might fall asleep when my brother needed attention most particularly. I have not slept myself all night—I have been so fidgeted about this—thinking of the danger to him."

"How much is in the purse?"

"I do not know—spend what you will."

"I will account to you for every penny."

"I want no account. I want only to be assured that David will be attended to by one who will not be too tired to keep awake."

"Then, Mr. John, I accept."

With great reluctance Sheena took the purse. Then she departed.

John stood outside the farmhouse door, and watched her as she disappeared in the misty moonlight.

Day had not as yet broken.

Presently he started.

What if Nathan Groes were abroad?

Would it not be advisable if he were to accompany her on her way, at all events as far as beyond the wrecked toll-gate?

But no—assuredly Nathan was safe in bed at Ty Gwyn at five o'clock on a winter morning. Nevertheless John was uneasy, and he pursued her; he did not attempt to catch her up, but kept at a distance, just far enough in rear to be able to run to her assistance should she cry out for help.

So he followed her to the outskirts of St. David's; then only did he return home, go up to his bedroom, but not to sleep—to bathe his heated face and burning eyes, and prepare for his day's work on the farm.

CHAPTER XV

IN the evening, when night was putting the extinguisher on the day, John Evans junior left the house, and left his father engaged in controversy with the housekeeper. The farmer was rebuking and browbeating the unfortunate woman, who was humbly excusing herself and promising amendment. At his early dinner the old man had partaken of beefsteak pudding, and had found the beef tough, and it had disagreed with him.

The black Pembrokeshire cattle either put rubber upon their bones in place of flesh, or only fall beneath the butcher's blow when age has deprived their meat of softness and succulence.

Such beef as they yield up when dead has to be kept interminably, and basted well, to make it edible, and the beef which Mrs. Thomas had cooked for the farmer had resisted every effort to render it tender, for not even hearty goodwill can convert gristle into meat.

John Evans senior was in high wrath, and

poured forth a storm of abuse over the head of his housekeeper.

He was a domestic tyrant; and the more yielding those were with whom he had dealings, the more unreasonable, exacting, and peremptory he became.

His son had ever deferred to him, save only when the old man was captious toward David. John the younger was an easy-tempered youth, who bowed his head and let the blast of the storm pass over it, rather than encounter it erect; consequently the habit of grumbling and domineering had grown unchecked on this old man.

The devil of fault-finding is one of the worst of the unclean spirits that enter into man. It spreads itself till it has pervaded his whole being, twisted the fibres of his heart, made a hotch-potch of his brain, jaundiced his eyes, and mastered and distorted his tongue. It spoils the capacity for seeing beauty and goodness. It kills as by a frost-bite all sense of gratitude. It clouds the windows through which the soul looks up to God and abroad at men. It sees faults only, never excellences.

John went into the farmyard to the stables, leaving his father girding at Mrs. Thomas. He could do no good by interfering. So he brought out the tax-cart, harnessed the cob,

mounted and drove off. The old man was too much engaged over his grievances to notice what was being done.

He passed through St. David's and proceeded at a smart rate to Solva. Beyond that little port was a long hill, and to surmount it and spare the horse he descended and walked, and became impatient with the cob because the brute paced so leisurely.

On reaching the summit he remounted and drove briskly on, and whirled rapidly down the hill to the Newgall bay, where the road runs along the beach, often overflowed by high tides that heap the highway with pebbles and render it impassable. He was now eight miles from St. David's, and expected shortly to meet Sheena.

The night was dark. The moon would not rise till late, and he dreaded lest he should pass her in the gloom.

"Hey! who goes there?"

Indistinctly he saw a figure on the road.

"Is that you, Sheena?"

A timid "Yes," in reply.

"Jump up, little body! I have come to fetch you."

"Why? Is David worse?"

"David—no! but you must hurry home. Your grandmother should be relieved, and her

relief will be one to my brother also. She talks too much. She does it with the best intentions. I told her that she must not allow him to talk. 'Arrah!' said she, 'do you think I'll give him the laste bit of a chance?' Give me your hand, Sheena, and I will help you up. Right you are; I will turn the horse's head, and we shall soon be home. What is that noise?"

"I do not know. I have noticed it already."

Both hearkened. There was a sound of distant trampling as of horses borne on the light air.

"There is not and never will be a mail-coach on this road," said the young man. "I would have sworn it was one, though."

"Some horses have broken out and are galloping along the road."

"No, the sound is too measured for that. Anyhow, we cannot wait to find out. It may be some waves buffeting skerries somewhere. Did you ever hear of the sea-horses coming out of the waves, shaking their white manes, galloping over the shingle, and leading the sea to drown the road and swallow up the tavern? Well, Sheena, what luck? Have you found in Haverford all you desired?"

"Yes, I have a good deal of figured chintz and silk."

"Was it a heavy bundle to carry?"

"Oh no! I did not mind that. I was glad to have so much, and grandmother will be pleased beyond measure."

Presently John drew up at the door of the tavern on Newgall pebble-beach. It stood there then, it—or its successor—stands there now, defying danger, for few pass over this wind-swept stretch, where the sea moans perpetually, without desiring something to nerve the spirit depressed by its desolation; and the trade is sufficiently good to encourage a landlord to defy the storms and the tides. A light from the open door streamed over the road.

"You must have something to warm you," suggested John.

"No, no, please. I am hot with walking."

"But you will become chilled with driving."

"I had rather not. Press forward, I want to be with Davie. I shall not be happy till then—indeed, indeed."

John whipped the cob and drove on. At the hill he descended and walked, but would not suffer Sheena to do the same. He was very silent now; and as he said nothing, she did not speak. Whilst mounting the tedious ascent from Newgall, at a slow pace, again Sheena heard the trampling as of horses behind. But whether John's ear caught the

sound she doubted. He made no remark. He seemed immersed in thought.

As he resumed his seat at her side he said shortly: "You seem to be vastly anxious to be back with Davie."

"I am. You told me that granny talked too much, and he needs rest."

"Oh yes! he has been wishing for you. He asked repeatedly for you. I saw it in his eyes that he was longing for you."

"Poor David! Grandmother does not understand. She thinks that everyone at all times requires to be amused. She cannot comprehend that there are moments when tears do more for us than laughter."

"It is so," acquiesced John, and again silence ensued.

But presently he burst forth: "Sheena, I must know something. Will you be angry with me if I ask it?"

"No; I am sure you will ask me nothing that would make me angry."

"And you will answer me truly?"

"I will speak the truth, or not speak at all."

"I should not have asked that last question. You carry truth in your face."

"What is it that you desire to know?"

"It is this. You seem to be vastly interested in Davie. Is there anything between you be-

yond caring for each other in a—a friendly sort of way?"

"I hardly know what you mean," said Sheena.

"It is this. I would know if you like Davie more than as a brother, and that he cares for you more than he would for a sister?"

"I am very fond of Davie," replied the girl frankly, "but I never thought of him—I never can think of him—in any other way than as a friend, almost as a brother. Why do you ask?"

"For his sake. I love Davie; he has no one else to love him but myself, at least at Rhoson. And because I am so fond of him, all that concerns him lies very near my heart. I thought that perhaps——"

"I never had such a thought. It could not be otherwise than that I should value him as a true friend."

"Thank you, Sheena." John drew a long breath, one that came from the depth of his heart. "I was desirous of knowing because of Davie."

"He never speaks of you, Mr. John, but with the utmost affection. You are a prince, a hero in his eyes."

They had now a good road before them over slightly undulating tableland, and the cob sped along at a good pace. The brute was aware

that its head was turned in the direction of the familiar stable and oats.

The night was clear, the stars shone brightly. There was frost in the air. John was not cold. He felt a glow throughout him. At every jolt of the wheels over a stone the little girl at his side was jostled against him. Roads at the beginning of the nineteenth century were not macadamised, but were made and mended with unbroken stones—here with pebbles from New gall beach—and some time elapsed before they were ground down by traffic.

Below twinkled the lights of Solva, and down the hill they sped, but faster still through the village, over the bridge that crossed the tidal stream. Then ensued a tedious ascent This time John did not leave his seat. But five miles more had to be covered before St. David's was reached, but five more miles of a seat beside his companion whose shoulder touched his.

When they had surmounted the hill, again they heard the tramp behind as of horses, and both turned to look. As it happened they turned in opposite directions, so that their faces met, and the lips of John touched the cheek of Sheena. He started as if he had been stung.

On the trap rattled over stones, and pitched

into ruts, till suddenly, after having passed a hamlet named Nine Wells, John sharply turned his cob's head.

"Oh but, Mr. John, that is not the way!" protested Sheena.

"No, not direct to Rhoson, but I intend taking you home, to your home. You shall not go on to Rhoson to-night. On that I am resolved. I have made up my mind to sit up and keep watch with Davie."

"Oh! please go forward. You must not; you have been working so hard on the farm."

"And you have had so exhausting a trudge."

"No, no, prithee take me direct to Rhoson; I have undertaken the task, and I wish to fulfil it."

"I am driving, and you are not," said he; "I have a stubborn will, and when I have made up my mind, and formed a purpose, there is no bending me."

Sharply he turned out of the main road at a point where the Ffos y Mynach crossed from sea to sea.

In remote times a chief, Cynyr of Caer Gawch, the Red Castle, held sway in this region. In his old age he became serious-minded and surrendered his land to St. David, his grandson, for the good of his soul. Then David and his monks threw up an embankment,

and dug a trench from sea to sea across the headland, to demonstrate that the land within belonged to God, and that it was for ever to be separate from the world with its pomps, its vanities, its love-making, and its quarrels.

But the Ffos y Mynach was broken down, as the great wall set up by the Roman emperor from one firth to the other was overleaped by the Picts to ravage Britain. But there was this difference—the Ffos y Mynach had given way not before one mighty assault, but by pin-pricks, here a little and there a little, yet very effectually, and the world with its pomps and vanities, its love-making and its quarrels, had pervaded Dewisland, almost as soon as the great barrier had been completed.

The lane along which John Evans drove followed the old monkish line of demarcation; it was bad, and the trap could proceed along it but slowly, with many—not, to the mind of John, too many—joltings.

Then the Waun opened out before them, and over that ran the track, white because of the clay of which it was formed; and presently they were on the high-road that leads from Fishguard to St. David's.

Now John turned his horse again, and drove along the main road in the direction of the town, when, to his surprise, he heard a tumult

of voices before him, shouts, cries, and occasionally the crack of a gun. Next a blaze of light shot up in the still dark night.

"Heaven bless us!" exclaimed he, "who ever would have thought of this? The Rebecca girls are out destroying the pike on the Fishguard road: what shall we do?"

But it was too late for him to think of turning and retracing his course to the Haverford and St. David's way.

Already he was among men running, and some of these recognised him by the flicker of the fire reflected from his face.

"I say, Shone Evans," shouted one, "Peter Sturgis is showing fight."

"Indeed," returned John, vexed at being recognised driving, with Sheena at his side, and so late in the evening.

"Look here," said the man, putting his hand on the splash-board. "Peter is a Tenby man, and he vowed he would not be turned out of his nest. What he paid to get in I don't know. He has no wife and children to care about, and so he will stick to his post and dare Rebecca to do her worst. Rebecca and her daughters have attacked the gate, and, I believe, have cut it to chips."

John laid his whip across the back of the cob, and it started forward.

The man who had spoken to him caught the bridle, and arrested the beast.

"That won't do, Shone Evans," said he; "you can't drive along the highway past the toll-house. If you venture, Peter will discharge his blunderbuss at you, out of rage because you go through and don't pay the toll. He's in a pretty taking on, and firing right and left. He hasn't done much harm yet, but he will before long, and that would be an ugly matter if he sent a slug into you or your girl."

"She is not—I mean—this is Sheena Lewis."

"Oh! I didn't notice; I thought it was Dinah Bowen. Been to Haverford to get the ring?"

CHAPTER XVI

THE turnpike on the Fishguard road had been taken by Peter Sturgis, who came from "Little England beyond Wales." This was a colony of Flemings planted in south-east Pembrokeshire by Henry I., when they fled before the bursting of the sea over their dykes and the formation of the Zuider Zee. He welcomed the refugees, and planted them on the coast of Pembrokeshire to serve as a check on and an annoyance to the native Welsh, whom they cut off from the sea, and robbed of their most fertile land. Thus it came about that for centuries the descendants of those colonists from Flanders and the Welsh regarded each other with hostility; the former assumed masterful airs, knowing that they had the support of the Crown and the English people. They flouted, depressed, and pillaged the natives with impunity. The Norman barons and the kings of England had no more trusty allies than these Flemings, who lost their language and acquired the English

tongue. Where they settled they passed a sponge over the country, to efface every local Welsh name, and to replace it by one wholly Teutonic. The descendants of these settlers at the present day occupy the same tract of land accorded to them in the twelfth century. In their sturdy build, their stature, their colouring, as in their language, they remain distinct from the Cymri.

A strongly defined line divides the Flemish from the Welsh country. English only is spoken in the former; in the latter Welsh prevails, and did so at the beginning of the nineteenth century, though at present it is giving way.

Peter Sturgis had taken the toll-gate, and he was determined to retain it. He had received the following epistle, which made him grow red in the face, and brought a glare of defiance into his watery-blue eyes :—

"*To Peter Sturgis, gatekeeper.*

"This is to give notice, that before Thursday next he is to remove from the toll-house with all his effects, and to give him warning that if he neglects so to do, he will have to take the consequences, which will be Blood and Bones.

"REBECCA."

Peter had waxed wroth when he heard that the keeper of the turnpike on the Solva and Haverford road had submitted on reception of a similar notice. But then, he was a man with many ties in the place, of which he was a native, and he had a wife and children. This was a sufficient excuse for him. But with regard to himself, things were otherwise. Peter was alone in the world, he was related to no one in Dewisland. He had contracted to take the gate, and had trusted to make a livelihood out of it. Its destruction meant ruin to him. Moreover, some of his Tenby friends had tried to dissuade him from venturing on the speculation, and he was loth to return among them and confess that they had been right, and that he had been smoked out like a fox.

Peter was a clumsily built man, with red hair, heavy eyebrows, and what at the period was an unusual appendage, a red beard.

He made preparations quietly against the attack on the gate. He possessed a blunderbuss, and he despatched a notice to the magistrate, Sir John Pryce, that was characteristic of the man. He informed his worship that the gate was menaced, that two others had already been destroyed, one house had been wrecked, and a second burnt; that he intended to defend his property and dwelling, and that he was

possessed of firearms and would use them. That before he allowed his house to be broken up he would shoot twelve men, and roast those he had shot in the fire that consumed his habitation. If the magistrates objected to blood being shed they must look to it. And he further informed his worship that the performance would begin some time after dark on the ensuing Thursday, before the moon rose.

According to his expectations, much about the time expected, Peter heard the blowing of a horn, and saw lights advancing along the road from the town.

Thereupon he put the pole across the road, fastened it, closed his shutters, locked and barred his door. Then he extinguished his candle and mounted to his upper chamber, that commanded the road. He was perfectly cool. Being a bit of a musician, he took up his flute, tuned it, and played—

> "Come if you dare, the trumpets sound!
> Come if you dare, the foes rebound!"

Before very long the mob was at the gate, and Rebecca, the leader, was issuing orders for its destruction.

Thereupon the frowsy head of Peter appeared at the upper window over the door, and

with it the trumpet-mouth of a blunderbuss looked out on the crowd.

With an oath he roared: "The first who touches the gate, I shall fire on him."

"Do not heed him," shouted the leader. "He durst not do what he threatens," and starting forward, he struck the pole with his axe.

Instantly followed a flash and a report, but no one was shot. Peter's bite was not as bad as his bark—no shot had been put into the gun. He preferred to frighten.

"Rush him!" ordered the leader. "He can't fire when we are at the door."

"Ay, but how are we to reach it unpeppered?"

A rush was, however, attempted, but again the firearm was discharged, and this time it was loaded, and the shot rattled on the road and against the wall on the further side; whereupon the assailants fell back.

Then Peter put his head with the flute out of the window and warbled insultingly—

"Come if you dare, the trumpets sound!
Come if you dare, the foes rebound!"

A consultation was held. The leader ordered all the lanterns to be extinguished, except one, which was to be concealed.

Then Peter roared from his elevation. He told the Rebeccaites that they were what their habiliments proclaimed them to be, women and not men. Let them come on and try his caper sauce to their mutton.

Presently he saw the party advance. They had dismounted a gate, torn the thatch from a shed and bedded the top of the gate with it. Several young men approached under this cover, much as Roman soldiers beneath their shields, forming a "tortoise."

Peter Sturgis fired again, but ineffectively, for the gate progressed to the turnpike, and from beneath the shelter they proceeded to hack and wrench at it, and finally succeeded in breaking the pole away from its rest. Then, still screened, they advanced to the house, and by driving the beam against the door, attempted to ram it open. Sturgis blazed again. One man was hit, uttered a cry, and fell out. He was not badly hurt; he ran away, but instantly another started forward and took his place.

Those under the extemporised screen were at a disadvantage, in that they could not use their arms freely and maintain the gate in place on their heads. However, they managed to swing the pole and drive it at the door. This, though split, would not yield, and after a third trial the men withdrew, and the pole was taken

possession of by some boys, who with choppers hacked it to pieces.

The assailants now broke into two bodies, and proceeded to creep round the house, clinging to the walls, so as to make it impossible for Sturgis to fire at them from his upper window. The house had a straight wall in rear, but in front towards the road had three sides, with windows below commanding the highway right and left, and the door in the middle.

Advancing from the rear, where was no opening, the Rebeccaites succeeded in encircling the house, and they passed forward straw and brushwood from hand to hand, so as to make a pile of combustibles at the door.

Peter Sturgis divined their purpose, and emptied his ewer out of the window on the mass, without being able to drench it.

He now descended the stairs and threw open the shutters of the two windows of the lower room, but as there were no casements, these could not be opened. He therefore now blazed at the glass, shattering it into fragments. No one was hurt, but those without were frightened.

It was, however, still possible to creep forward by keeping the body bent below the

window-sill, and one lad carrying the lantern did so, reached the pile, and proceeded to kindle it by taking the candle out and throwing it among the straw.

The fire mounted, but it did not break out fiercely at first, for the thatch was damp. It sent forth volumes of white, pungent smoke; but this was for a few minutes only, and then up shot a column of flame.

At this juncture John Evans drew nigh; the fire was now blazing so fiercely that it illumined the road and the figures of the Rebecca rioters, and the faces of those looking on. But if the light showed all these to John, it also allowed those who were about the toll-house to see who were in the tax-cart.

"What is to be done, Sheena?" asked John in sore perplexity. "It's a long way round by St. David's, and here we are close to your cottage—if we could pass before that house; but there is that wretched man blazing away from it, regardless whom he might hit."

"Let me get out," suggested Sheena, "and I will walk."

"Walk!—walk past his door and the window, through which he has poked the end of his blunderbuss! He might mistake you for one of the daughters of Rebecca. No, indeed, Sheena; I know what to do. I will take the

horse and trap into a field, out of the road. You will not mind holding the reins, will you? I should like to see how this affair will end."

Without awaiting a reply, he turned the head of the cob, threw open the gate into a field, and led Garw through.

"There, Sheena, you will be out of the way. I shall not be far off; only climb the wall and see all till it comes to a finish."

He left the girl, and ascending the wall near the gate, had a full view of the crowd—those who were disguised, and those who were not; the roaring fire in front of the door; and every wall and thorn bush stood out as clear as if the stones and the twigs were of gold.

Although the young men of Rebecca's crew were disguised, and their faces covered, he felt sure that he knew several of them, some by their build, some by their movements, some by their voices, which they were unguarded enough to raise in shout and use in loud conversation with their mates.

How long would the door resist the flames? Every now and then a disguised youth, creeping along below the window-sill, threw on additional fuel, and the flames for a moment died down, only to leap up with greater vigour at the next. John could see the boys who had

got hold of a portion of the bar: some of them were chopping it to chips with axes, and some cutting off shavings with knives.

Hark! surely again he heard the sound of trampling horses.

Then suddenly a young fellow, not clothed as a woman, sprang forward, with a fragment of his pole, rushed past the window—crack! went the gun, but he was gone and unhit, and he drove the burning pole against the door and rammed it into the charred wood, and then away to the other side, to where John Evans stood on the wall, looked up laughingly at him, and said: "We'll be into the house in two minutes, and have Peter Sturgis out, and duck him in Dowrog Pool."

"No, you won't!" exclaimed John; "here comes——" He had seen a glint of weapons, a flash of scarlet, and into the road from the side lane came a body of soldiers on horseback.

The lad saw them also, and shouted with full lungs, "Hey! boys! the military!"

Next moment he ran back to the crowd of onlookers on the further side of the gatehouse.

At the same moment the leader of the Rebeccaites started into the road, tore off his habiliments and his veil, revealing to John's

eyes a scarred face, bundled the clothing into the fire, and was gone into the darkness.

John descended by a leap to the ground in the field, ran to the horse, led it to the gate, and out into the highway and mounted. He knew it was the best course for him to pursue. It would show that he had taken no part in the riot.

The military came on now at a gallop. They had been unable to proceed at speed in the rough lane; but now that they were in the road spurred their horses to a gallop. They were led by Sir John Pryce, the magistrate.

As by magic all the Rebeccaites had vanished. The walls served their purpose. They plucked off their disguises and thrust them into ditches and crevices among the stones. Some, crouching, ran along under the walls; some careered across the fields. Not one was on the road. There remained those only who had been spectators, taking no part in the wrecking.

Then out at his door came Peter Sturgis, and kicked the heap of flaming brushwood to this side and to that, and brayed, "Haw! haw! haw! Come if you dare! The trumpets sound! Come if you dare! The foes rebound!"

There was no need for Sir John Pryce to read the Riot Act. There was no attempt at resistance. The onlookers stood gaping with

astonishment, and, in conscious innocence, dumbfoundered.

"Haw! haw!" yelled Peter; "the white feather shown after the red cock's plume!"

John Evans now attempted to drive along the road. Peter leaped before him and demanded the toll.

"I have passed through the Solva gate," said John.

"Show me the ticket," demanded the gatekeeper.

John produced it.

Sir John Pryce came forward.

"What is your name?" he asked. "You have seen what has been going on."

In a cowering knot stood a number of those who had been passive lookers-on, hemmed in by the soldiery. Ridiculous among them, under arrest, was one of the canons of the cathedral, with a woman's frilled cap on his head and a red cloak over his shoulders, that had been clapped on him by one of the Rebeccaites when about to make his escape. Beside him, also under arrest, was the deacon of the Calvinist chapel, with a bundle of chips under his arm.

"I may pass, I think," said John. "I have come from beyond Solva, and have delivered up my ticket as evidence. I have nothing to

do with this affair. I would have driven on my way, but that the road was blocked by Rebecca and her daughters."

"That may be true enough," said the magistrate. "I do not doubt it, but I demand your name and that of the young woman. I shall summon you both as witnesses."

CHAPTER XVII

WHEN John went up to his brother's room he saw that David was feverish and in pain. His eyes were bright with an unnatural lustre, and a burning flush was on his face. He looked eagerly at the door as John entered, and then turned his head away. Directly after he turned it back again, and said something which John did not catch. But the questioning look showed Shone that the lad was disappointed. The old woman, who had been with the patient throughout the day, was totally unfit to be a nurse. She was an admirable stimulant, not a soporific.

John said no word to his brother of the occurrences of the evening, but quietly dismissed Mrs. O'Grady, and then took a chair by Davie's bed. Every now and then the sick lad looked towards the door, whenever he heard a step in the passage, or heard a voice in the room below.

"What is it, Davie? What do you want?" John inquired.

But the sick man replied, "Nothing, Shone, nothing," and turned away.

However, David did exactly the same thing on the next occasion, and an inkling of the truth came into John's mind.

"Is it Sheena you are seeking, Davie, boy?" he asked. "I am sorry to tell you that I take her place to-night. She has had a hard day. She has been into Haverford, and she watched by you all last night. She is dead beat, and I have undertaken to occupy her place for this night."

"Will she not come again, Shone?"

"Yes, Davie. But not to-night. She really is not fit for it. You must spare her."

"I am a selfish beast. God forgive me!" said David.

"She will be here to-morrow," said John. "But really she was too tired to be in a fit state to nurse you to-night. You must put up with me, Davie."

For an hour Davie was content, and remained quiet, and then again became restless: the pain of his wound, the fire in his veins, were affecting his brain.

"Davie, old boy," said Shone, "so soon as you are yourself again I will persuade father to let you have your violin here."

"I must not play it," said the sick youth.

"Father says it is caterwauling. Besides, I am very happy at the Waun. Mother O'Grady and Sheena both love the music."

Presently he dozed.

John's experience of watching through the night was that it was a very trying undertaking. To occupy his hands he had brought some string, and he proceeded to knit rabbit nets, a noiseless work. He must be engaged on something. But his mind was more active than his fingers. He thought over what had happened recently.

One reason why he had diverged from the main road was because he had been reluctant to drive through the town with Sheena at his side. In a little place like St. David's every eye was observant and every tongue was free. He was convinced that, had he been seen with her, it would have become matter of common talk and speculation and ill-natured comment in twenty-four hours. He had driven into a gathering of all St. David's loose population at the toll-gate, and the fire that had illumined everything had shown him and his companion to all eyes.

Moreover, the prospect before him was not pleasant. He and Sheena would be called as witnesses against the rioters. He had seen and had recognised several of them. He had

conversed with the fellow who had driven the pole against the turnpike-keeper's door. He had seen the face of Nathan Groes as he thrust his disguise into the fire. Here, indeed, was an opportunity of chastising Nathan for what he had done—the stabbing of his half-brother; but, if he gave evidence against him, could he hold his tongue concerning the others?

It would be very unpleasant for him to have to appear as a witness against those who were his neighbours, acquaintances, friends, some kinsmen, sons of substantial farmers. It would lay the seeds of lifelong estrangement, of bitter resentments.

Moreover, sentences were likely to be severe. He had heard of some of these Rebecca rioters being sentenced to transportation. How could he face those who were his friends and kindred after having spoken the words which had made of them convicts?

Was there no means of avoiding this?

He considered, and forgot his rabbit net. Then an idea occurred to him, and he started on his seat. Rather than give evidence against those whom he knew, and with whom he was more or less allied, he would disappear. He would leave Rhoson next morning, so as not to be in the way when the summons was

brought to the place, and he would remain in concealment till after all danger was past.

To disappear meant to be absent whilst David was ill. It meant that he would be out of the way, and not know how he was progressing. It meant more. It would oblige his father to engage an additional labourer; but it meant also this, that he would be out of Rhoson whilst Sheena was in the house.

During the night the house was still. He could hear the tick-tick of the clock in the kitchen, which was inaudible in his room during the day. And because of the stillness the rats and mice came out to run races, explore for food, make captures, and convey them to their lurking-places.

The room became close, and John opened the window and looked forth. The moon was up now, and he could see the silvered bunches of rock that rose above the tableland, and they looked as though molten silver had been spilled over them. Notable above all these was Clegyr Voya, crowned with the ramparts of a *dun* that had been occupied by an Irish pirate in the sixth century, who had given St. David much provocation.

The boom of the ever restless, ravening sea came in with the cold night air.

Then John heard a disturbance among the

geese. Were they troubled with bad dreams, or had a fox got among them? He had supposed that Davie had trapped all the foxes in the neighbourhood. Oh, that unlucky jacket made of their skins! There!—John struck his head with his hand. He had forgotten about Sheena's arm. He had not inquired after it, so engrossed had he been in solicitude for his brother — perhaps also with the pleasure of having Sheena beside him in the cart.

Then he resumed work on the net, dropped stitches, and had to remake a portion.

He began to feel cold sitting there. He shut the window again, and in doing this roused David.

John at once applied cold compresses, gave his brother a cooling drink, and soothed him with gentle words.

Davie promised to try to sleep again, and he lay quiet, with his face turned away from the rushlight; and John went on with his netting and with his troubled thoughts.

Poor little Sheena! What a still, patient figure had been hers on the previous night! She must bring her knitting with her next time; there would not be light enough for sewing. She surely must have suffered from the cold. His own feet were like lumps of ice. A draught swept in under the door and caught

and numbed them. He would put wraps for her before she came again, with which she might cover her feet and knees. There was no fireplace in the room, which being under the slates was very cold at night. He wished now that it had occurred to him to insist on his brother being taken to his own room, where there was a fireplace and a small grate. But if he left Rhoson that could be done, as his chamber would be vacant. The night stretched on, but with infinite slowness, and presently John became hungry.

A watcher through the long dark hours invariably feels the need of food. No one had considered this on the foregoing evening, and nothing had been set out for Sheena.

The hours between two and four are those during which the vital forces are weakest, when the night cold becomes most intense. During these hours, what with weariness, the chill and hunger, John felt utterly miserable. He determined that the neglect of the previous night should not occur again. But who would attend to the wants of Sheena when he was gone?

Before a streak of morning appeared there was a stirring in the household. The new day was about to be born, and the domestics must be up to prepare for it.

The old farmer was not an early riser. He did not appear till the kitchen fire had been lighted, and the kettle was at the boil, but he was exacting, and required his servants to precede him by at least an hour. He had a heavy stick in his room, and with this he banged the floor, as a signal that they were to rise.

So soon as the household was astir and he could leave David, John descended the stair, and went out to attend to the cattle and the horses, and a couple of hours elapsed before he returned. As he did so he saw Dr. Jones ride from the door; he had paid an early visit to his patient. The farmer had finished his breakfast; John sat down to his. As he poured himself out a cup of tea he saw that the old man was in a bad humour, and regarded him out of the corners of his eyes in a manner that boded no good.

"Humph!" said old John, as young John began to eat, "here is a pretty kettle of fish. The Rebeccaites have been out and have demolished the gate on the Fishguard road. But the military came up, and arrests have been made. They have taken Canon Jenkyns, who was in female disguise."

"Canon Jenkyns, father! Impossible!"

"It was so, and Deacon Howell; they seem to have got hold of the wrong men. But also

Seth Jones and Lewis Rees. The fathers of these two will enjoy their buttered toast this morning, I will lay my life. That is no affair of mine. If they were such fools as to get embroiled in this riot, they must expect unpleasant results. You can't sit down in boiling pigwash and come off without blisters."

"I know it, father."

"Of course you know it. You saw it. The story is all over St. David's that you drove the wench of Mother O'Grady to see the show."

John was too staggered to speak or to continue eating. His father's hard eyes were on him.

"I'd like to know," pursued the old man, "what you meant by taking the cob and trap out at night without my consent."

"Father," said John, waxing red, "Sheena had been into Haverford, and I met her on the road, so as to drive her part way home; she had a bad arm."

"That would not interfere with her walking."

"It was but charity to consider her."

"Charity!" echoed the farmer. "Everything has its place. I like charity, I love it, within the covers of the Bible. But there let it remain. I don't leave my rum flask about for everyone to take a pull at it, but lock it up.

And so deal with charity; it's an expensive article, and had best be kept where its proper place is—in the Bible."

"I acted for the best," said John; "Sheena had been watching by Davie the previous night."

"That is not the worst of it," went on the irate farmer; "the story is all over the country that you have been driving about at night with that lass. What will Dinah think of it? Eh?"

"I will go at once to Ty Gwyn and explain."

"No explanation will serve," retorted the father. "I know women. I have had a wife and a score of housekeepers. They are compounded of self-conceit and jealousy. Do you remember Susan Jennings? That woman would not tolerate a female servant in the house who had any pretence to good looks. Then there was Mary Hughes, she was as spiteful as an old cat when your cousin Jane Owen came to see us. She would not allow us to talk on business together, but was for ever poking her nose in. And Patience Prendergast, she was given over to bows and ribbons, and stuck to me as a leech. Bless you! I know women. They have no reasoning faculties, only emotions, and these are summed up in self-confidence and jealousy. No, John! it's a bad business, and you will

have stirring weather with Dinah. Women can't reason. Talk to Dinah about charity, and she will not believe a word of it, put in the way you represent it. Tell her that I had sent you on business to Roche, and that as you were driving back you overtook her, that she was limping, and caught the bridle, and told you she had injured her foot, and could not take a step forward, and so compelled you to give her a lift—she will believe that, but call you a fool for being taken in by the girl's cunning. I know women."

CHAPTER XVIII

"THERE is something more, father, that I must say," John observed gravely.

"Is not that enough—that you have given Dinah an advantage over you? And she will take it, as sure as she is a woman."

"It is this. I was on the spot when the gate was broken and the toll-house attacked."

"I know you were. I heard as much from Dr. Jones."

"But what you do not know is that Sir John Pryce has given me notice that he will summon me as a witness against those who have been taken."

"The deuce he has!"

"He has done so, and I shall have to give evidence against Lewis Rees and the rest of them."

"You never saw them."

"I did so."

"But you did not recognise them."

"I did recognise them, and I spoke with Lewis, who tried to break in the charred door of the pike-house."

"Bah! the night was dark."

"But there was a blazing fire."

"Pshaw! we never see the things we do not want to see."

"I cannot help myself; I shall have to kiss the book."

"Only the cover, Shone. The cover is nothing but dirty leather that binds you to nothing; it binds nothing but the book itself. Take care what you are about. You may stir up a hornets' nest, and the mischief will be that I shall get stung as well as you."

"Father, I am resolved what to do. I will go away."

"Whither?"

"I will not say. I shall remain hidden till after the petty sessions, and the storm has blown over. And I shall be out of the way so that the summons cannot be served on me."

"Well," said the old man after musing a while, "after all, perhaps your plan is the best. It is a bad job to get entangled by a confounded lawyer for the prosecution, and unless you are very sharp, and have well rehearsed your evidence, that might happen. Where will you hide?"

"I will not tell you."

"You may do so. I need not know if I am asked."

"It is safest that you should be ignorant."

"Trust me," said the farmer; "no amount of cross-questioning would get out of me what I did not choose to tell. But—of course I shall be fully acquainted with your movements. You shall go to Merioneth—to Machynlleth to get me a tup there. I want one of the North Wales strain. And you will go then to see after a housekeeper for me. I have given notice to Mrs. Thomas; she has begun coming the affectionate, and I can't endure that. Then the sooner you start after that tup, the better. And as to a housekeeper, I'll have no old hag, nor must she be too young and frivolous. You understand."

"I shall start at once. I will not even say good-bye to Davie, lest I should excite him." He quitted the room; he had eaten little breakfast. But before he left the house, he made up a bundle of his clothes, put rugs in Davie's room, and enjoined on Mrs. Thomas to set out some food for Sheena when watching. Then he departed, and took the way to the coast.

Rhoson stands very near the cliffs, and is commanded by no other houses. The walls between which the lanes run are high; and John slipped down that which led to Porth Stinian, a cove reached by a steep descent over

rocks, and where a boat was always kept, drawn up above the reach of the tide.

Ramsey is an island a mile and a half long. It is one that, like its sister isle, Skomer, off the other horn of St. Bride's Bay, has missed its vocation. Had these two islands been thrust across the great mouth of the magnificent bay, to serve as a breakwater, they would have converted it into one of the finest roadsteads in the world, and would have made the prosperity of Pembrokeshire. But instead of this, Ramsey, like Skomer, lies off the point of the northern horn of this bay. Ramsey runs parallel with the land, and between it and the mainland is a race of water.

It rises into two heather-clothed hills, crowned with ancient cairns, and it shows a ribbed and iron back to the Atlantic, cliffs so bold that against them the rollers dash themselves to spray, and, beaten into yeasty waves, are lashed with the foam flung back at them from the crags, as whips to sting them on to fresh assaults.

Beyond Ramsey, out at sea, is a constellation of rocks, the Bishop and his Clerks, and on one of these is a lighthouse.

On the eastern side of the island, that looks upon Dewisland, the isle slopes downwards, but still holds up its skirts of turf and heather on

cliffs above the reach of the waves, except at one point where the rocks fall away and allow a landing-place.

To the south of this same landing-place, half-way across the channel, is a reef known as the Bitches, about which is a dangerous eddy that shifts sides with the change in the tide. And in the fair-way of the Sound are three sunken rocks, the Horse, the Shoe, and the Leper's Rock.

In a gale the races of the tide in the channel are terrific.

Between tides, or, in sailor's words, at "slack," boats usually cross, but only in fine weather, when no heavy sea is running. Boats go to Ramsey with the tide, and return with the ebb. John Evans knew thoroughly the manner of crossing, and the humours of the current and the moods of the sea. As wind and tide suited, he at once committed himself in the boat to the current.

In the summer time, when the sun shines, the sea in the channel is of the clearest crystal green, just touched here and there with plumes of silver. Contrasting with this translucent green are the red and purple cliffs, and the glorious mantle of crimson heather brocaded with the gold of the gorse, that the island wraps about it. Then—to see a boat with wings

spread leap down the channel, speed through, avoiding the reefs and the eddies, and dance forth upon the heaving bosom of the bay of St. Bride beyond, is enough to make the pulses tingle. But now, in that winter morning, when no sun showed as John crossed, there was nowhere colour or glory. The sea was as though all the inkpots of all the scribblers in Europe had been rinsed out in it, and the very foam was without brilliancy, a sodden grey.

To Ramsey in the sixth century had come a stranger of unknown family and race, and had taken up his abode in it.

St. David got into his coracle of osier twigs covered with a tanned hide, committed himself to the current, and was swept across. He desired to know who this stranger was. The man informed him that his name was Justinian; and David satisfied himself that he was lettered and pious. He accordingly sent over to him a couple of serfs to minister to his needs, to dig his garden, fish and collect eggs for his sustenance, and cut and stack turf from the bog for his winter fire.

But they found that Justinian was rough of tongue and temper, and, above all, that the solitude in the island was intolerable. So they put their heads together, murdered their master, and escaped in the boat.

Then the people on the mainland resolved to esteem Justinian as a martyr, and Ramsey became an object of pilgrimage.

Perhaps, nowadays, some of us are also victims to our servants, but they put us to slow torture, and do not finish us off so expeditiously as did those churls of Justinian.

Next Ramsey became the Coventry to which monks and clerics were sent when they had misconducted themselves, or were quarrelsome, or peevish.

Then came the Black Danes and effected a lodgment on the isle, and thence dashed forth, rushed upon the cathedral, slew the bishop, butchered all they could find, burnt every building, and decamped, laden with spoil.

But at the time of our story Ramsey was peaceable enough, to all appearance, out of the reach of the rush of the passions and excitements of life. That there must at one time have been a good many people living on the isle would appear from the number of human bones turned up in its ancient graveyard. It is a haunt, a very paradise of sea-birds. The razor-bill, the guillemot, the tern, the kittiwake, the solan-goose, the puffin, and the cormorant are there in their multitudes, undisturbed as in an inaccessible resort. The rocks ring with their cries, and they whiten the ledges with

their guano. In a bay scooped out of the stubborn cliffs by the eternal working of the unwearying waves, it is as though a perpetual snowfall were there, so dense is the air with the feathered living flakes, sailing, eddying, wheeling, never falling; and the ear is deafened by the clamour. One who has entered by a boat must shout to his mate to be heard above that turmoil of bird-voices. And there, in the caves bored by the surf, on shelves lie the dusky seals, with their white young, watching with soft, beseeching eyes. But if the daring intruder venture too near, he is assailed with a shower of pebbles, hurled at him by their fins or flaps, discharged as from a catapult; or, if he brave that, he is upset by the beast flopping down on the boat and into the water.

Wondrous is the exuberance of life in the world. The Creator must create. He cannot be alone. Where man is not, there the other forms of life multiply: in the depths of the sea, in the barren waste under a polar sky, on the rocky isle, on the solemn moor. Man appears, and these beauteous forms withdraw, as the elves have vanished when he invades their domains on the bicycle and the motor-car, and marks his track with discarded tins and broken bottles.

John Evans arrived at the little strand, Road Isaf, and drew up his boat to where it would be safe. He looked around, and a sense of rest, as if a gentle hand had touched him, came over his fevered soul.

The rest of solitude! Who in this work-a-day world knows it, or knowing loves it? The most healing and invigorating medicine that can be given to the troubled spirit and the tossing brain and the torn heart. Elijah, fretted, discouraged, despairing, went into the wilderness a forty days' journey and found God. The Son of Man sought the desert, and was nerved for His three years' mission and death. On the mountain apart, the disappointments, the controversies of men blew away. He was transfigured. No — in this work-a-day world, where all is mechanical, and life is at high pressure, and every moment of time is taken up with an engagement, or spent in distraction, we know not what solitude with its balm is; and with an horizon limited by the houses on the opposite side of the street we cannot look into infinity.

But John Evans was not to enjoy total solitude and be benefited by being altogether alone. He had not gone far towards the farmhouse before he saw a man approach, in ragged garments and in his shirt-sleeves,

and with a bush of unkempt hair, who asked, without a salutation: "What do you want here?"

"Rob Roberts," replied John, "I have come from my father to see how all progresses on Ramsey."

"Nothing progresses, all is at a standstill. Does he mistrust me? Does he think I am going to put the island in my pocket and run away to Milford and spend it there?"

"Rob, no such thing, only—he desired information."

"Then go back and tell him that all things are as they were and ever shall be. Amen."

"I cannot return with the tide flowing, Rob. Besides, I do not intend to go back. I shall have to remain here as your guest for some little while—perhaps for weeks."

"Why so?" asked the man suspiciously. "Have you been getting into a scrape and want to be out of the way?"

"I will tell you the facts, Rob," said John. "There has been some rioting on the mainland, and turnpike burning and breaking, and unhappily——"

"You were in it."

"Not so. I chanced to see what went on, and the soldiers came, and several of our young fellows have been arrested. The magis-

trate, Sir John Pryce, saw me, and said he would summon me as a witness against them; accordingly I desire to be out of the way so that the summons cannot be served on me."

"Why so?"

"Because I do not relish the notion of being put in the witness-box."

"I would, I would glory in it. What do you suppose the fellows will get?"

"Possibly transportation."

Rob Roberts burst into hoarse laughter, and flapped his arms. "The chances always fall wrong in this world. If I had been there I would have run all the way to Haverford to denounce them."

"But why? They have not wronged you."

"I like to pull others into bad holes, because I am in a bad hole myself—this cursed Ramsey, shoved into it by your father."

"If my father put you here, you may perhaps resent it against him, though really, Rob, I thought it was done to suit your own convenience——"

"And his also. He could get no one else to look after the farm."

"But you have no grievance against Lewis Rees and the rest of the lads, that you should ruffle your plumes against them."

"I am ruffled against all who are better

off than myself. I would thrust all to the bottom that I might sit atop myself."

John said no more, but went on to the house. Within was Rob's wife, as sour as himself. In the evening Rob seated himself, smoking, on one side of the hearth. His wife crouched on the other, rising occasionally to look into the cauldron that simmered over the peat fire. Neither spoke. Living on Ramsey, where one day passed as another, subjects of conversation were scarce, and they hardly spoke to each other.

Rob Roberts had made himself so many enemies by his perversity and ill-humour as to be quite unendurable in Dewisland. No farmers would engage him, and he had been reduced to a condition of destitution, when Mr. Evans had offered him to be his hind on Ramsey. He had accepted, but resented banishment from mankind with which he could not get on. He was angry at being on an island where there was no one except his wife with whom he could quarrel.

During the long evening, by the scanty light of a tallow candle, John worked at his rabbit net. Not a word was spoken. He had attempted at intervals to start conversation, but the attempt had failed; neither Rob nor his wife cared to talk.

After the lapse of some hours, suddenly Rob, glaring at his wife, exploded with, "You're a cat, a grinning cat!"

To which she responded, "You are a hog! I wish one of these potatoes cooking would choke you, Rob."

"And I wish," retorted he, "that you fell into the pot and were stewed. Wouldn't I sip the gravy with relish!"

John interposed: "Rob, why do you insult your wife?"

"Insult her!" shouted Rob; "what else can one do to keep the blood from going stagnant? Better that a crab should splutter roasting than sleep away and rot."

It was clear to John that the balm and rest of solitude in Ramsey were not to be his; there, even there, would be jars.

CHAPTER XIX

FOR two days Shone Evans found plenty of employment for his hands. Tools had to be sharpened, agricultural implements to be mended, and he was a capable hand at rough blacksmith's work. Sticks of furniture needed repair, and he was skilful as a carpenter.

But all this putting to rights came to an end, and he looked about for more occupation. The race and eddy in the channel were like the rush and swirl going on in his own head. He sought to forget his troubles by setting himself manual tasks.

A paddock wall was broken down in places, and he undertook to build it up again.

A two-faced wall should have two men engaged on it, one on each side, otherwise the labour goes on slowly. But time was of no object to Shone, and Rob made no offer of assistance. Of this, however, John Evans was glad; he preferred to be by himself to having the companionship of so unamiable a man, a confirmed grumbler.

But whatever he did to stem or to turn the current of his thoughts, he failed; they streamed between all the obstacles thrown up, and finally swept them away. And now, as he worked on one face of the wall, he looked towards the mainland, and could see the roofs of Rhoson, the bunch of rocks beside the house, and the bolder crags of Carn Trefeithan. Ty Gwyn was behind a swell of land, and, if he looked that way, he could not see it.

But when John went round to the inner side, and worked at the face opposed to that on which he had been previously engaged, then his back was to the mainland, to his home, to the chimney from which smoke rose, to the roof that covered his brother and her who watched him.

He was less easy when employed on this inner face; he felt as though he were drawn by invisible cords to turn and look to his rear —across the rushing belt of sea.

Now and then, his thoughts becoming abstracted from what he was engaged upon, he fitted the stones badly together, and was compelled to undo what he had completed. Recollections forced their way upward in him as flashes of smothered fire, and made his hands shake and let fall a block he was adjusting.

He had not far to go for material; almost sufficient lay where it had fallen when the wall had been broken down. No mortar was used; the stones were set one on another and held in place by their own weight. But to build such a "dry wall" demanded some skill.

In the afternoon Rob came to him, and stood hard by, smoking and contemplating him superciliously. He had on a coat now, faded in colour and out at the elbows. His hands were in his pockets. For many minutes he looked on without speaking. He was on one side of the wall and Shone on the other.

Presently Rob broke silence and said: "I love work."

"Then take off your coat and lend a hand."

"I love work," repeated Rob. "That is to say, I love to see work done by others."

Again ensued a long silence. On the top of a stone lay a velvety mass of moss, very green and dense with long hairs, each headed with a tiny seed, forming a golden cloud above the myrtle-green. It was beautiful. If Shone had seen it on the mainland, he would have picked up the mass and taken it into the sick-room to show to Davie and to his nurse.

Presently Rob observed: "This is no good at all. We never put cattle into the paddock."

"I hate to see anything out of repair."

"Do you?—then patch up yourself."

"What do you mean?"

"That you are all to pieces—and how and why I don't know and don't care. If you want to do something useful, knock my old woman on the head."

"I wonder," exclaimed Shone, "I do indeed wonder, Rob, that you should speak of and act towards your wife in the way you do."

"Do you?"

"I do, and it disgusts me. I presume that at one time you loved her."

Then a thrill passed through the man, his face changed. He drew the pipe from his mouth and said in low tones, "I married the wrong one. That is it. Shone, never you do that. I didn't know till too late that the right one would have had me. So I was tied to the wrong one and grew all crooked. Shone, never do you stuff a closet with vain regrets; they will be like cats miawing and squealing, and give you no peace."

He turned sharply on his heel and walked away, with his pipe in his hand tightly clenched.

Shone continued his occupation, but worked slowly and ill. The words of Rob had stirred what was in his soul into wild tumult.

To continue the wall was beyond his capacity at that time; he cast down the mallet and strode away.

He would do no more that afternoon. The smothered fire in his heart was breaking out, and maddening him. He desired to be alone. He could not be sure that Rob would not return to the paddock. The enclosure cramped him in, he could not break free within the bounds of walls.

He turned away from the farm and its precincts. Proximity to it was odious to him. In his then frame of mind and condition of nerves, the discordant element of Rob and his wife was more than he could endure.

He made his way upwards to the open moor, to where there were no enclosures, where the air was free and the prospect more extended.

He was soon beyond the fields, his feet were deep in the heather. That was brown, harsh, and dead. The heath was but a short existence, like the passion of love in man. It flowers for half a month and then dies away. It is the last of plants to feel and respond to the breath of spring and the glow of the summer sun. It buds in August, blooms in September, and withers away in October.

He resolved to ascend Carn Llundain, the

highest hill in the island, rising some five hundred feet above the sea precipitously towards the west.

As he waded on he startled an occasional rabbit, nothing else. There were no sheep here. The heather grew too thick to allow of herbage, and the gorse bushes would have caught and torn their fleeces. He paced forward, ever upwards. It was tedious work wading through the dense growth that reached to his knees and drenched his legs. He heeded it not. Then he stepped forth on a tract of bog where the mosses were bleached or turned crimson with frost, and where the cotton grass, that in summer waved silver tufts in every breath of air, now hung sodden, discoloured, and draggled.

He had to move cautiously in the morass, lest he should sink, leaping from one tuft of coarse rush to another, till he came on stones and could step from one to another.

After a passage over the marsh, more laborious than the trudge through the heather, he reached swath.

His brow was beaded with perspiration. He was at once hot and cold—hot in head and heart, and chilled at the extremities.

Ramsey oozes with water, though there is but a single spring that rills down to the farm,

where it is caught in a pool. But the rain that falls on the heights lashing them must escape somewhere, and it percolates everywhere, soaking and sopping all the ground.

The sheep that live on Ramsey are not of the best. Old George Owen, who wrote in 1603, says that the sheep reared on the island "being brought aland, being amazed at the sight of people, they runne and become wilde, and will not be taken more than wild deere."

To the swath of short, wiry, dry grass succeeded a rocky tract. Fallen blocks strewed the ground, and between them were brakes of heather, and John had to ascend warily from stone to stone, and thread his way among the masses, through bushes that reached to his armpits. At length he stood on the summit, near which, but not on the highest point, rose a cairn, thrown up to some unknown chief at some unknown period, by an unknown people. Strange is the perversity of the human mind. The ancient pagans, who knew not God and had no aspirations after heaven, laid their dead on the tops of mountains and on high ridges as near heaven as they could reach, whilst the Christians aspiring to heaven buried their dead, as at St. David's, at the bottom of a ravine, or, as on Ramsey, at the lowest point on the margin of the sea.

John Evans went to his cairn of loose stones and cast himself down.

Although this was but the third day since he had left Rhoson, yet an age seemed to have passed. Rob Roberts was not wrong when he blurted forth the remark that John was going to pieces. The bright and cheery young man was vastly changed. He was altered in appearance and in mood and manner. His lightness of heart was gone. His step had lost its elasticity; he no longer held up his head and looked the world in the face with good-humoured defiance. His bearing was without its wonted buoyancy, his eye had become dull, his lip had lost its wonted smile. His very shoulders had rounded and given him a stoop. In his heart was an ever-corroding pain; in his brain a worm. He could not sleep, only take snatches of slumber that did not rest him, but left him stupefied. The colour had gone from his cheek, and left it sallow, except only that now and then a hectic flush rose to his cheekbones.

He cast himself down on the cairn, and with nervous fingers that must be doing something plucked at the stones, and flung them from him to bound down the steep declivity into the sea. Every one of these stones had been brought to the mound by some mourner, with a heartache, and each was a tangible expression of a sorrow,

and each, as he flung it away to be lost in the ocean, represented a pang in the heart of John Evans ten thousand years after the stone had been brought there, and placed whence he dislodged it as a token of heartache.

Before him was the ocean. The horizon was high up; and a sullen sky lowered down over a peevish sea. About the Bishop and his Clerks, and what Robert Owen calls his "quiristers"—the sunken rocks that continue these ridges and reefs—the waves were bursting into foam and fretting, drawing across the grey monotone a streak of dull white, as the scum upon molten lead.

Blots of darker colour were on the face of the deep, that was throughout gloomy.

The soil at the summit of the hill was bare of vegetation; none could endure there where the surface was lashed by the blasts. It was raw and saturated with water, flogged incessantly by the winds and the swish of rain and the rubbing in of the brine.

John lay on the cairn, looking westward, still with the drops upon his brow, and felt some approach to repose on this life-destitute height. He could distinguish the heave of the great breast of the ocean, and his own full heart heaved with it rhythmically. He saw rolling mounds of water sweep on, and then

disappear. But this was followed by a boom and a crash and a burst like thunder. They had shivered themselves to spray against the cliffs, or penetrating the tunnels bored through the headlands, blew out beyond in blasts of foam with an explosion as of cannon. Yet all was not lifeless. Below him wavered and drifted the gulls in thousands and tens of thousands, specks of white, as leaves of a silver poplar blown about in a whirlwind.

Not a sail was on the sea.

The outlook, to the mind of Shone, seemed as desolate as that on his own life.

He knew now that he did not care for Dinah Bowen, that he had never really loved her. What love was—a dominating, supreme passion—had been unknown to him till after he was engaged to her. Now it had come, when too late, as a revelation.

He doubted whether Dinah cared for him. He could look back on the whole transaction now, and he saw how blindly, carelessly, he had committed himself. He had admired Dinah's good looks, he had been ambitious of possessing Ty Gwyn, he had taken it as a matter of course that he and Dinah would jog on easily together. And now the day of his marriage was rapidly approaching!

"Oh, God! My God!" broke from his

parched lips, and he buried his face in his hands. For a few minutes there was a lull. It was as though a merciful hand had rested on him, and suspended all his inner consciousness—a paralysis of heart and mind. And thus he sat on the stones, with covered face, his breast heaving as did the breast of the dull ocean below.

But this truce from pain did not last long, and then he drew his hands away, and looking again seaward, he began to pick at the stones, and fling them, he cared not whither. The gulls shrieked, the sea roared, the wind whistled, and despair fell on him, and John longed to cast himself down after the stones that he threw from him, and which after a few dances bounded into unknown space.

He was an honourable lad. He had passed his word, and not for a moment did he think of being false to it. If he had made a mistake he must abide by it, and bear the consequences. If thoughtlessly he had botched his life, a botch it must remain.

He cast himself face downward on the cairn, and the scent of the moss and lichen was in his nostrils.

Did he care for Dinah? Did he respect her? Did he love her? No! No! No! And their lives were to be linked together.

He would be true to her. But—oh, God!—that other—that other—that other!

Then he seated himself, and continued to tear at the stones, and hurl them from him, unconscious of what he did; and as he continued doing this, presently his finger became entangled, and passed through something. He looked with dull, unobservant eyes at what was on his finger. His mind was preoccupied. And, still indifferent, he rubbed with his sleeve what he had got, and continued rubbing whilst still looking seaward.

Then the sky began to disengage itself from the horizon, and to become defined, and to disclose the true sea marge. The clouds articulated themselves, and assumed first a muddy and then a ruddy tinge. Suddenly a rift was formed, the lid of cloud was lifted, and the setting sun, as an eyeball, stared out from under its dark eyelid full in John's face.

As by magic, all was transformed. A road of quivering gold led over the sea from the unexplored depths below John's feet, away to the very orb itself. As with us—as in life—so it is. The intermediate step is all mystery, and is unexplored. Beyond is light, leading to glory.

The clouds flushed with pleasure, as dull maids that suddenly have found a lover; the

screams of the gulls were lifted from a despondent key into one of exultation. A little bird, of what sort John did not know, sprang up from a rocky nook below, soared into the heights, and against a black cloud, catching on its wings the glory of the sun, was as a bird of living fire. And then John looked down at his finger, and saw encircling it—a gold ring.

CHAPTER XX

JOHN EVANS had passed a week in Ramsey, when one night, as Sheena sat in the sick-room of David, she heard a scratching at the window.

She was startled, and for a minute afraid to move, but then recovered herself, and as the noise continued, she threw open the casement and looked out.

She could distinguish someone below, who had called her attention by means of a long stick of thorn. She inquired who was there.

"It is I, Shone, and I pray you let me in. I must see Davie again, and know how he is getting on."

She lighted a candle, descended and unbarred the house door.

But John did not enter. He caught her by the wrist and drew her forth; then, taking the candle out of her hand, held it aloft so as to illumine her face. The air was still that night.

"Little girl! little girl!" said he, "you look worn and ill. This nightly watching is wearing you away."

"It is not that, Mr. John."

"What, then, is it?"

"I have been summoned, and I shall have to appear before the magistrates the day after to-morrow."

"That's bad, but you can say nothing; you were in the field and could not see. However, about that presently. Tell me now what I really must know, how fares my brother?"

"He is mending. I shall not be needed above another week."

"How so? I thought it would be a long case."

"Your father is becoming impatient. He says that as David is ill, and you are away, he is compelled to have another man, and that Mrs. Thomas and the girl can very well manage with David."

"For your sake I am glad," said John, "for that of my brother I am sorry. As to appearing before the magistrates, you can give no evidence that would hurt a fly. Come and sit by me on the bench; I must have a talk with you, Sheena, and we cannot do that in Davie's room, lest we should disturb him."

She disengaged her wrist from his hold, took the candle and put it down within on the table, then returned to the door, and stood there nervous and dubious. John grasped her

hand and drew her to the bench outside. This was below his own bedroom window and on the further side of the door from the kitchen and the room above it, occupied by his father, so that they could converse there without being overheard.

"Now, Sheena," said John, "sit down. When was the constable here?"

"The day after you left. He asked for you, as he had a summons or a warrant, I do not know which they call it, to require you to appear at the petty sessions. But your father said that he had despatched you into Merionethshire to buy some sheep. The constable inquired when you would be back, and Mr. Evans said that he could not tell—sheep are slow travellers, and you were too prudent to overdrive them. Have you got the sheep?"

"No—not yet."

"Then why have you returned?"

"To see Davie. I have been off my head with anxiety about him. Tell me what the doctor has said."

"He says that the knife went so near to the lungs that by a hair's-breadth they were missed. If the knife had entered them he would have been dead by now."

"Poor Davie! and he will recover?"

"I hope so. Doctor Jones is encouraging,

but says that for a long time he must not exert himself violently."

"Sheena," said John, starting up, "I must go and look at him. Is he asleep or not?"

"He is asleep now."

Instead of at once entering the house, he reseated himself and began taking off his boots.

"Sheena, tell me, is there anything between you?"

"Between us? Oh, nothing!—we have always been friends."

"I do not mean any quarrel or barrier. Do you like him?"

"How can I do other? He has been to me as a brother."

"Ah! but brotherhood does not hold when it does not run in the blood."

"No! no! no!" exclaimed she in distress. "Do not think that there is anything of that sort. If there had been I should not have been his nurse."

He kicked off his boots.

"I will steal upstairs on tiptoe and look at the old boy. Father does not care for him. He has no one to love him but you and me. I never met with a more gentle spirit, but it is lodged in a body with the strength of a lion. Remain where you are, I pray you,

till I return. I have been—never mind where I have been—but I have been where I had no one to speak with about—about Davie. I must have a talk with you."

He passed within, and shut the door after him. So soon as he was gone Sheena's head sank on her bosom, and she sobbed.

Then she was aware of a pressure on the bench as of someone taking his seat beside her, and at the first moment supposed that Shone had slipped back. But this was not possible; he who approached came from the side away from the door through which Shone had gone. Next moment a hand stole round her waist, and a voice hissed in her ear, "So! so! now the daylight breaks on me. It is not David that you are angling for, but think to catch Shone, and whisk your fish away out of Dinah's net."

Sheena drew aside in terror and disgust. She knew by the voice who was there, her inveterate persecutor. Involuntarily a cry escaped her.

"Ha-ha!" said Nathan, "this is your little game. But let me tell you it will not answer. Take care lest in running after the moon you fall over the cliff. Come, now, take me. I have a little farm offered me, I could not wish for one better."

Then between his teeth he began to hum the song at the time so popular :—

"When a little farm we keep,
And have little girls and boys,
With little, little lambs and sheep
To make a little noise,
Oh! what happy, merry days we'll see!"

Sheena twisted herself from him.

"I saw him scratch at your window," sneered Nathan. "Every Welshman knows what that means. I would have knocked him down but that I desired to see what would come of it. You cannot catch him. He is secured past your powers of getting him away. Why, he would be a cur to break with his Dinah now, and everyone in Dewisland would spit at him. So there, now, a quick wooing and a brief settlement. Short hair makes quick brushing. I am not empty-handed. I shall have half the farm of Ty Gwyn—snatch that away from Shone Evans, and won't he rub his eyes over that! Come——" And he went on with the song in a muffled tone :—

"Then we'll keep a little maid
And a little man beside,
And a little horse and pad
To take a little ride.
With the children sitting on our knee,
Oh! what happy, merry days we'll see!"

Sheena started to her feet.

"Never! never!" she gasped. "I hate your voice, your touch stings me like a wasp; it ought to—a vile, murderous hand, for it was you who stabbed David!"

He sprang towards her and she cried out.

Next moment John Evans came forth, and at the same instant Nathan disappeared into the darkness out of which he had emerged.

"Sheena!" exclaimed John, "what is the matter? I heard you cry."

"I was frightened. I saw—I heard something."

"What, Sheena?"

"I saw——"

"Whom? what?"

"I could not see any face—there was, however, someone here."

"You are over-tired. Come inside. Your fancy is playing tricks with you."

John Evans drew the girl within, and looked attentively at her by the light of the candle. She was deadly pale and was trembling.

"Oh, Sheena, this is too much for you! You are being worn to a thread by this night watching, and I do not suppose you get much rest by day. I wish I could relieve you. But I dare not be found, lest I should be

summoned. Some way must be found of lightening your task, my dear—girl."

He was agitated himself. To disguise his emotion he felt in his breast-pocket, and drawing forth the ring he had found in the cairn, said almost roughly, "Look, Sheena! See what I have found on Ram——I mean what I have found in some old king's or queen's grave. It is a gold ring, very ancient, and with zigzag ornaments on it. I shall wait till the day comes and then take it to Ty Gwyn for Dinah—Dinah, who is to be my wife."

Then, abruptly, without another word, he left the house.

CHAPTER XXI

JOHN EVANS went to the stable, there threw himself down in a hayloft, and fell asleep. He did not wake till the sun had risen. He had brought food with him in a pouch. He did not wish to be seen and to be questioned by anyone about the farm, lest the news should spread that he was still in the neighbourhood.

The day was Sunday. He tarried where he was till the household had departed to church or chapel, and then he descended from the loft, and unobserved made his way from the premises to the cliff, and passed along over the sand-dunes in the direction of Ty Gwyn.

He could hear the cathedral bells. But notwithstanding their musical call, only a few answered it. To every one who went to the church a score attended the chapels that had no bells. In ancient days men made themselves idols of wood and stone. We are past all that—we fashion our own religions out of

our own fancies. The Word of God, we suppose, comes unto us from below, and does not descend from on high. "Vox populi, vox Dei."

The great stretch of sandy down covers the Roman town of Ad Menapiam. The conquerors of the world ran a paved road from Caerleon straight over hill and down dale to the coast here, and in those piled-up sand-hills it comes to an abrupt termination. They designed thence to effect the conquest of Ireland. Menapia—that was the Irish coast that could be seen on a summer evening thence, and so they called the station whence the conquest was to be achieved Ad Menapiam.

John did not meet a single person on his way. He descended from the sand-hills by the Ffynnon Vaidoc, an ice-cold perennial spring that gushes out beside the road to Porth Mawr, whence the Roman galleys were to start for the subjugation of Ireland. This spring, according to tradition, was called forth by Maidoc, a disciple of St. David, who went to Ireland, taking with him a hive of bees, the first bees that ever were in the Green Isle.

He was parched with thirst. He had eaten, but drunk nothing. He halted here, slaked his burning throat and bathed his hot face, and went on his way refreshed and invigorated.

No dog barked at him as he ascended the steep lane to the White House.

When he reached it the door was open, and inside stood Nathan Groes, smoking. He was on the doorstep, and looked down maliciously on John.

"Well," said he, without budging, "what do you want here?"

"I give no account to you," retorted John. "I will trouble you to stand aside and let me pass."

"There is no one within. The mistress and Miss Dinah are at chapel."

"I will await their return."

"You can do so. How come you here? We were told you had gone wool-gathering into Merioneth."

"Where I have been is no concern of yours. Let me pass."

Nathan stood aside.

The manner of the man was offensive.

When John entered the sitting-room and seated himself, Nathan followed, with his hat on his head and his pipe in his mouth, and stood looking at him.

"The constable has been in quest of you," said he.

"If he has," replied John Evans, "he did not find me. I am not going to be put in the

witness-box against Lewis Rees and certain others."

"Certain others," repeated Nathan. "Name, name."

"I saw the leader of the Rebeccaites burn his mask and his disguise."

"Indeed—and who was he?"

John looked at the man with anger. "You pretend not to know?"

"I do not know," replied Nathan, with composure. "I suppose that you mean to insinuate that I was there. I have heard that you drove up with—with someone at your side."

"I saw him with his scarred face."

"Then you do mean me. As to my scarred face, that was got in a brawl over a wench you fancied."

"Nathan!" exclaimed John, flaring up.

"Oh!" mocked the fellow. "I draw my conclusions from your exclamation on that occasion. I tripped over the confounded lantern, and you flew at me screaming, 'For——'"

"Silence!" interrupted John, his face scarlet. "Leave the room."

"I am on guard here," answered Groes, "whilst my mistress is away. So—you could swear to seeing me at the gate on the Fishguard road?"

"I could."

"And I would bring evidence that I was here all the while, evidence that would outweigh yours."

"You could not. If you did, it would be false."

"Ask my young mistress where I was that evening."

John looked at the insolent ruffian with amazement. Nathan remained quite unconcerned, and said: "How is Humpty Dumpty? I heard he had a great fall."

John saw the purpose of the fellow, it was to exasperate him to an act of violence. He had to exercise great self-control not to fly at him.

"I heard," pursued Nathan, "that the poor creature met with an accident."

"Accident!" echoed John Evans. "He was stabbed in the back by some coward."

"Oh yes, at the wrecking of the toll-gate on the Solva road. I was told of it. I was not there."

The situation was becoming strained beyond endurance. Happily at that moment Mrs. Bowen and her daughter arrived. Nathan at once removed his hat, put his pipe into his pocket, and his expression altered to one of deference. He opened the door for Mrs. Bowen and withdrew.

Mrs. Bowen was pleased to see John, and regretted that he had not been at chapel, where Mr. Hughes had preached with great unction, and had prayed with extraordinary fervour for those unhappy—or rather, as he put it, unfortunate—young men who had got into trouble, and who he trusted would escape out of the snare of the fowler, and he further invoked the Almighty to break the snares of the ungodly, and set all their devices at naught.

There had been some rain, and Mrs. Bowen, as a prudent woman, careful not only for her health, but also for the conservancy of her Sunday gown, retired upstairs to change her garments.

Thus Dinah was left below with Shone. She moved about the room without taking notice of him. She threw off her cloak and hung it over the settle to dry, removed her hat, and unpinned her kerchief, all without a word of welcome.

John watched her with concern.

"Well—Dinah! have you not a word for me?"

"I did not suppose you desired one, after having had so many with another girl."

"What girl do you mean?"

Then, with flaming cheeks and a flashing eye, she faced him.

"You know what I mean. You have invited to Rhoson that low Irishwoman and her wretched granddaughter, a girl without character, a light-of-love, and you tear about the country in an open trap with her, at night, too."

"Dinah!" exclaimed Shone, "withdraw those words. I can explain my conduct to your satisfaction, to that of any reasonable being. But I will not allow such a slur to be cast on Sheena Lewis, who has come to the aid of my poor brother, half murdered by an assassin whom you harbour here."

"Hah!" retorted the girl, "I throw back the charge in your face. What assassin do we harbour? Prove your words."

"I cannot prove them, that is true. But I am morally convinced that Nathan dealt the blow that only just missed killing my brother."

"And I am morally convinced that your Sheena Lewis is no better than she should be."

"You shall not say such things."

"And you shall not denounce Nathan as an assassin when you cannot prove it. You are a coward to speak thus."

"Dinah, be reasonable. I did not come here to quarrel with you. I will explain everything, but I must insist on your withdrawing

those offensive words. Poor Davie was stabbed, and the blade only just missed penetrating his lungs. Neither Mrs. Thomas nor the maid had leisure to attend to him, and so my father summoned Mrs. O'Grady and Sheena."

"At whose urgency?"

"Not at mine. Doctor Jones brought them. I was not consulted."

"And since that wench has been at Rhoson for an entire week you have not been here to see me. You have been driving her about."

"Dinah, you are determined to anger me. I have not been at Rhoson, I have been away."

"Oh yes, no doubt, buying sheep in Merioneth."

"Wherever I have been is no matter. I have not been at Rhoson. I had to disappear, so as not to be forced to give evidence against certain of our young fellows whom I saw at the destruction of the Fishguard road gate. If I had remained I should have had to speak, and I would have said that I saw there your Nathan Groes."

"It is not true. He was here."

"Dinah, how can you assert that?"

"He was in the stable with the cows. I would have gone into court and sworn to that."

Shone was staggered. He said not a word, so greatly was he shocked; for he knew that Nathan had been at the spot he said, and if Dinah said otherwise, she lied.

She faced him with her bold, defiant, dark eyes, her cheeks flaming and her rich, full lips quivering with passion.

Presently he collected himself and said coldly, "Dinah, do you mean to tell me that you would deliberately swear that Nathan was here, engaged on the farm, when I saw him elsewhere?"

"You saw him!" scoffed the angry girl. "You hate him, and would swear him away into prison, into transportation, because you are jeal—I mean you hate him."

"On the contrary, I am in hiding, so as not to appear in the court and be forced to speak against anyone. And you would actually go before the justices and swear to this? You mistook the day, the hour."

"I did no such thing. I know what the day was and what the hour. Look you! We saw a blaze in the direction of the Dowrog Waun, and I went to the cowshed to find Nathan and ask what was happening there. And he and I looked at the fire from before our house. There—will that satisfy you?"

Shone was silent for a moment or two, and

then said: "It is just as well that a little time should be allowed to elapse for you to cool. I came here to-day to say that our marriage must be postponed."

"What?"

"Yes, for three months, until the assizes are over."

She turned deadly white.

"I run the chance of being summoned as a witness, and I must keep out of the way till all risk is at an end."

"Three months!" she gasped.

Then suddenly the blood rushed into her face, and dyed cheek and brow and throat. "It shall not be; it must not be! We will be married at Christmas and get it over."

"It cannot be. I know what I have to do. I must remain concealed—and so—we must postpone the marriage. But it is only for a short while."

Then she blazed forth in fury: "You coward! The base coward that you are! It is all because you want to go junketing about with that beggar wench before I am by to cut your wings with my shears."

"Dinah, you must not speak like this. I tell you I must be away till the assizes are over. After that I will claim you. Till then and ever after I will be true to you."

She stamped with passion, threw herself into a chair and burst into tears.

"I must go," he said. "I dare not remain about longer. In three months."

"Three months!" she gasped, and bowed her face to her lap.

CHAPTER XXII

JOHN walked away in haste, with fluttering heart. He was greatly perturbed. He was very angry at the offensive remarks made by Dinah relative to poor, gentle, harmless Sheena. He was shocked and alarmed at the utter want of principle she had shown about an oath. She was ready to swear to a falsehood—and for what? To save the workman on the farm, Nathan Groes. It was right enough that she should do all that was possible, consistent with honesty, to screen the man; he might be sent away, concealed till the danger was over. But to avow with such effrontery her readiness to take a false oath, so as to save him, was intolerable.

That she should be jealous, having heard of his night drive with Sheena, was excusable. No doubt the story had been amplified and coloured by ill-natured tongues. That he could forgive, but not that she should exhibit supreme indifference to truth.

He had every intention to be true to her, to

his promise, and to trample out the liking for another that had sprung up in his heart since his engagement to Dinah. He would constrain himself as a matter of duty, and force himself to love Dinah.

But love is a spontaneous growth; it cannot be forced. It is like lightning that flashes out of a dark sky and fills all the heavens with its blaze, but, unlike lightning, it is not evanescent.

He had mistaken a passing fancy for love, not knowing what love was. But he had bound himself, and like an honourable fellow, he would adhere to his bond and make the best of it.

John had strict notions of integrity. He knew how easy was his father's conscience on such matters as truth and honest dealing, and he had put it down to an infirmity that must be excused. Perhaps, seeing how lightly his father regarded such matters had produced a revulsion in John against falsehood in every form and mode, and this had been strengthened by association with his half-brother, who was honest in thought and word and deed, transparent as the spring in which St. David had been baptised, bubbling up clear as light.

And now a horror fell on John. How could he respect and love the girl with whom he was

to pass his life if she looked on truth with indifference? How could he trust her oath to be faithful to him, when she was ready to swear to a lie to save a serving-man? John had reached the bottom of the hill before it flashed across him that he had forgotten to present to Dinah the gold ring which he had found in the cairn. He stood still, and debated with himself whether he should return on his traces and give it her or proceed on his way. But in her present mood it was probable that she would refuse it. He therefore abandoned the thought of going back. He would retain the ring and give it to Dinah when her mood was less heated and resentful.

It was doubtless hard for a girl who had made up her mind and made her preparations for a speedy marriage, to have the wedding postponed for several months. There was excuse for her irritation.

But when he had said this to himself, like a cold hand touching his heart came the thought that the worst exhibition of herself had been made by Dinah before he had informed her of the postponement.

As to the putting off of the marriage, he had shown a good reason for it. Dinah, when cool, would see this. To appear as witness and give evidence against the son of a neigh-

bour would be to cause a bitterness and provoke a feud that would last a lifetime.

Moreover, Lewis Rees, whom he had seen in the fray drive the pole in at the toll-gate door, and who had spoken with him, was not one of the daughters of Rebecca. He was an amiable, harmless lad, who had gone out to see what was in progress, with no intent to take part in it; and what he had done had been done out of a sudden impulse, out of boyish frolic.

Unhappily, he had been taken, and would be brought before the justices on Monday. It would be too terrible to think of Lewis being sent into penal servitude for such an act as this. Sir John Pryce was stubborn. He had brought the military from Haverford. He was resolved on making an example. If evidence sufficient was produced against Lewis, he would be sent to the assizes, and if he appeared there, would almost certainly be sentenced to transportation for fourteen or even twenty years. No mercy was being shown at that time to Rebecca and her daughters.

A proclamation had been printed and posted up at St. David's, in Solva, and throughout the land, offering £500 reward to anyone who gave information or produced evidence sufficient for a conviction in a case where life had

been lost, and £50 reward for each several conviction of an offender where a toll-gate had been broken and a turnpike-house had been wrecked. It would be cast in his teeth, John knew, that he had sold his friend for a sum of money. He would be looked on for life as the Judas of Dewisland. No! He must keep out of the way, for he would not lie. Surely Dinah would see that he was justified in his conduct.

As he strode up the hill, when he reached the Ffynnon Vaidoc, down the road came his father astride on a pony that ran like a cow, with both legs on the right moving together. It was an easy amble, and the old man had not troubled to put a saddle upon the cob, and his legs hung down, so that the feet almost touched the ground.

"Ho! ho!" shouted old John Evans, "who would have expected to see you here? How about the trip from Machynlleth? Have you left the beasts on the way? And my new housekeeper?" He burst into a laugh. "The constable came to Rhoson, and had to retire discomfited. As I explained to him, if he wanted you, he must go before a Merionethshire justice for a summons, and by the time he had got that, you would probably be in Cardiganshire, where it would not run."

Old John Evans had drawn the rein.

"Well, boy, I presume you are from Ty Gwyn? How is the blooming rose there? All right, I suppose?" And putting the back of his hand to his lips, he smacked it. He was a vulgar old man.

"Father," said John, "I have just told Dinah that the marriage must be put off for three months, till after the assizes. She is rather angry thereat."

"Ho! ho! no doubt. That will clinch matters. I heard that she was all of a flame of jealousy at your driving Sheena Lewis from Haverford by night."

"It was not from Haverford, but from beyond Newgall. We had some words over it; but Dinah will listen to reason when cool."

"Reason! that is what no woman ever listens to. She has but two ears, one open to scandal, and the other to flattery. Talk reason to her, and she cannot understand. You appeal to what is not in her, a faculty she does not possess. So you have had hard words?"

"She is ruffled just now, certainly."

"Shone, never have words before marriage. Afterwards they will come in heavy showers, but no matter. Words before marriage damp

and cool love. Remember, Ty Gwyn is a good farm, and you must get your nails into it."

"Whither are you going, father?"

"To see Dinah. I was afraid there might be a misunderstanding, and Ty Gwyn slip away, so I am going to do my best to patch up any quarrel that may have occurred. She is a handsome girl, and Ty Gwyn is handsomer. There are other Shones in Dewisland beside Shone Evans junior. But that is not all. Mrs. Thomas is leaving. I had some words with her, and she has been fretting. You see, Shone, she set her expectations too high, and thought she would get me under her thimble. I had to let light in on her mind, and she is going. I thought I'd just inquire of Mrs. Bowen if she could recommend me a staid woman to take the place of Thomas."

Hardly had John Evans left the sitting-room and farm at Ty Gwyn before the face of Nathan Groes peered in at the door on Dinah, who sat brooding with her hands working convulsively in her lap and a sullen fire glowing in her dark eyes.

The scars on Nathan's face were fast disappearing and only traces remained, no longer disfiguring his handsome countenance.

He passed into the room and shut the door behind him.

"Well," said he, "how goes the courting?"

"Leave me," answered Dinah impatiently. "Why do you help to madden me?"

"What is the matter now?"

"He has put off the marriage for three months."

Nathan laughed.

"I could have sworn he would do that after what I saw and heard early this morning."

"What did you see and hear?"

"I saw him and Sheena Lewis sitting with their arms about one another, fondling like loving doves."

Dinah quivered with anger. "You saw it—and did not revenge me?"

"What — jealous? Are you so fond of Shone Evans?"

"Nathan," said Dinah, her cheeks crimson with rage, and stuttering in her speech, "you know that I do not care for him. But for all that I am not one to be thrust aside for the sake of a half-Irish slut, a common beggar wench! No—I am not one to endure that."

Then Nathan stepped towards the girl, put one hand on her shoulder, and said soothingly, "Come, Di, is it worse for you that he who is bound to you should take a fancy to another, or

that I, who have rights over you, which you have given me, should be robbed of you by that jackanapes from Rhoson? Take me, and cast that fool Shone over the hedge, as you would a broken pot or a holed pan."

"I cannot, Nathan, I cannot. My mother would never consent. She would turn me out of the house without scruple. I know my mother, and what a cold, proud, hard heart she has. She loves no one but herself. She never loved my father, she does not love me. She would cast me out and puff herself up with pride, and consider herself a martyr to principle. It cannot be, Nathan; you know what my mother is as well as I do myself."

"She must be forced to consent."

"She never will give it."

"Have you tried?"

"I dare not."

"Then you must. And if she be stubborn we must flout her. She will come round, never fear, after a bit of grieving."

Dinah remained silent, twitching with nervous emotion.

Then suddenly she burst forth: "That girl—that bit of dirt off Dowrog Common—to think that she should supplant me with Shone!"

Mortified pride was then the predominant

passion in her heart; it obscured even the consideration of her own future.

"What is there in her? I can see nothing; can you, Nathan?"

"One who looks at the sun cannot see the stars," replied he coolly.

"But he has, and he has turned from me. That excuse about the assizes is all made up; he wants to have the time to make love to her. I know it."

Nathan brought her back to what concerned him.

"Hearken, Dinah: you say that your mother is proud. You are proud also. It is because you are so that you are ashamed of me, the foundling, the common workman, and that to escape me you engaged yourself to John Evans, a farmer's son. But now, what are you going to do? This postponement of the wedding for three months is only intended to prepare your mind for his total desertion."

Dinah planted her elbows on her knees, and rested her chin in her hands, and scowled at the fire.

Nathan awaited her reply. What came was not what he expected.

"I hate that girl! That she—such as she—should bid me stand aside, and wait three months — and perhaps be put on the shelf

altogether! Oh, Nathan, if you care for me, as you have often protested that you do, you will revenge me on her."

"And make the path smooth for John Evans to sneak back to you."

"No; I have done with him. You are right; he puts me off for three months to soften the blow. He does not intend to have me at all, but to take up with that creature."

"Of course, any fool can see that."

"Nathan, I charge you, drive her away. Revenge me on her. I will send for her here to do some needlework for me, and you waylay her in the lane; take a thorn bush and lash her over the face till you have torn it to rags; lash her, not so lightly as has been done to you, but mark her for ever; and see—see—what I will do for you!"

"You have no occasion to summon her here," replied the man; "something is brewing already, and before long she and her mother will be swept out of Dewisland."

"What?"

"It is pretty well known that she took the letter from Peter Sturgis to Sir John Pryce. And then, next day, she went into Haverford. Everyone knows what that was for: to take the summons to the military. And then she is called up as a witness."

"Hist!" exclaimed Dinah, startled. "There comes my mother. You must not be seen here with me."

"I do not care if I be. The matter must be settled speedily."

The door opened, and in came Mrs. Bowen with old John Evans.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE case of the Rebecca rioters was brought before a full bench at Mathry on Monday.

Five persons were charged. Three had been released on bail, the other two had been locked up.

These five had been swept together by the military and constables on the night of the destruction of the pike on the Fishguard road. They comprised Canon Jenkyns, the deacon of the Calvinistic Methodist chapel, the butcher of St. David's, and two young men, Lewis Rees and Henry Owen.

The case against Canon Jenkyns was an astonishing one. He was an elderly, eminently respectable ecclesiastic, certainly the last person one would have supposed to have been out on a frolic and in a riot. But when taken he had a red cloak over his shoulders and a woman's frilled cap about his head.

As it happened, at the instant that the soldiers had been observed, Rebecca and her

daughters had vanished like the Three Witches in *Macbeth.* Not one in disguise had been taken except Canon Jenkyns.

On his arrest the old gentleman had been too bewildered to explain how he came by the cap and cloak, but he had readily obtained his release on bail; he was, however, required to appear before the Court at Mathry, on the charge of being found out by night disguised for the purpose of committing a felony.

Canon Jenkyns, who was very nervous, explained, after having protested "Not guilty," that he had been dining that evening in question with his friend the Vicar of Llanhowell; that after dinner—— A roar of laughter interrupted his explanation. The Canon looked round in perplexity: why should folk laugh at his falling into such a predicament as getting into female costume after a dinner? He proceeded that he returned along the road, and after passing the turnpike he came upon a party of persons in various disguises, and with their faces blackened or masked, and as he could not make his way through them, had been forced to remain where he was. He had seen with surprise and concern how very disorderly their conduct had been. He had opened his mouth several times in remonstrance, but had not been listened to. When the soldiery hove

in sight there was a rush of the Rebeccaites, and suddenly he, Canon Jenkyns, found himself grasped, his hat knocked off, his shoulders invested in a cloak, and a woman's frilled cap on his head. Not being able to find his hat, and being liable to tic-douloureux, he had allowed the cap to remain. Moreover, he had been too bewildered and too affronted to take steps to divest himself of so anomalous and inappropriate a costume. He would call his friend the Vicar of Llanhowell to testify that he had dined with him. "And," suggested the chairman, "that you did not leave his house in the extraordinary disguise in which you were taken. I think, Canon Jenkyns, you may leave the court without a stain on your character."

The second to appear to the charge was the deacon. He had been a mere onlooker; he had gone out with the crowd, but as a protester against illegal acts, with the highest and purest intentions. When he found the road strewn with chips of the pole, he remembered that his wife was short of kindling for the domestic hearth, and, being of a frugal mind, he had gathered as much as he could carry, reasoning that the wood was dry, and purposing to turn it to domestic purpose. As to being concerned in the destruction of the pike, he was unpro-

vided with any instrument, and had not even a penknife in his pocket.

He also was discharged, but immediately both he and Canon Jenkyns were subpœnaed as witnesses.

The next to be called up was the butcher.

He had been a spectator and nothing else. He had been suffering from a headache, and his wife had advised him to take a little air, and inadvertently he had gone along the Fishguard road. It was doubtless true, and he admitted it, that he was running away when a trooper galloped after him and caught him by the collar, and that he had employed strong language to the said soldier, and had threatened to knock him off his horse. But he was unaware that he was committing any illegality in running. As his walk had been interrupted, he was exercising his legs by a run so as to work off the headache. He would call on Dr. Jones to give evidence that he had been attended by that medical gentleman for his liver.

He also was discharged and required to enter the witness-box.

The next two were young men. There had been smut on the face of Lewis Rees, and his hands were black when taken. But the dirt on his cheeks was not sufficient to serve as a disguise.

As to Henry Owen, he had received shot in his person, therefore he was certainly one of those concerned in the riot.

But no satisfactory evidence against them was forthcoming.

Canon Jenkyns had left his spectacles at home, and could see nothing without them. He had perceived a great number of persons, many disguised, but could recognise none.

The deacon had been too much engrossed in collecting chips to consider who had hacked the turnpike to pieces. The butcher had seen nothing at all; how could he when he was running away from the scene? He had not eyes in the back of his head or in his elbows.

Peter Sturgis could not identify anyone with certainty. He believed that Lewis Rees had run before his window, and that immediately after an attempt had been made to break in his door, which had been charred by the fire. He saw the face as the young man passed, and thought it was Lewis Rees, but was not prepared to swear to his identity.

Jane Lewis was called up to give evidence.

She had been returning from Haverford, and was in a cart, driven by Mr. John Evans junior. It was necessary for them to pass the toll-gate so as to reach her home. But as

there was a crowd obstructing the road, and they heard shots fired, Mr. Evans had turned the horse and cart into a field, from which she had seen nothing further. Questioned whether she had seen Lewis Rees, she reluctantly admitted that she had. He had come to the wall.

"What wall?"

The wall that bounded the field towards the road. Lewis Rees had spoken with John Evans, who was standing on the wall, and he—Rees—had certainly shouted that the military were coming.

But—where was John Evans? asked the Bench. The constable of St. David's explained that he had used his utmost endeavours to find him, but had not succeeded. He had been credibly informed that John Evans had gone into Merionethshire to buy some sheep.

As to Henry Owen, all that Peter Sturgis could say was that he had fired small shot at those who attempted to approach his door.

On being asked whether any of his shot could reach the spectators, he was unable to say. He had a blunderbuss, and the shot was wont to scatter; he did not know whether he had peppered one of the Rebeccaites, only he was certain that he had hit someone who had

started back with a cry. He could not recognise him in the uncertain light, but he took it that if freshly discharged shot were found lodged in the body of Henry Owen, that was evidence enough.

This was not the view of the Bench. The blunderbuss was produced in court, and proved to have a mouth like that of a speaking trumpet. Two of the magistrates were of opinion that there was no case against the young men, and that they must be discharged. But this was not what the chairman, Sir John Pryce, held. He was very angry. He had sent for the military and they had proved useless. Their being mounted had stood in the way of the pursuit of the rioters, who had made off across the fields and behind the walls. Half a dozen brisk constables on foot would have proved more effective. The whole affair was like to prove a fiasco, and he himself become an object of ridicule, not only in the county, but throughout the principality.

He vented his wrath on the constable of St. David's. He, the constable, had allowed three pikes to be attacked and two toll-houses to be wrecked, and had not been on the spot to do his duty. He had been culpably negligent in not securing John Evans. He had allowed him to depart, and had not gone with

the summons to his house till Evans was out of the way. No! he would not dismiss the cases. Material evidence must be found. It was scandalous that such illegal disturbances should be allowed to go on in the district. He should remand both Lewis Rees and Henry Owen, and he expected that the constable should exert himself, as he had not hitherto, to procure evidence for the prosecution. It was quite absurd. There must have been a hundred to two hundred persons present, and yet out of all these no witnesses worth a rush had been produced. He would certainly remand both. And he begged to remind all who heard him that the Government offered a reward of fifty pounds for every witness who could procure a conviction, and he, out of his own pocket, would add another fifty.

The Court rose. No one was in a contented mood. The chairman, a choleric man, was mad at the failure of his plan. He was angry with the constable of St. David's, and had a private talk to him. He said that he should apply for a couple of able officers—*able* officers—to be sent down to make up for his incompetency, and to stir up the whole neighbourhood till they had got evidence sufficient to make an example of retributive justice in Dewisland that would not be forgotten for a

century. He reminded the constable that a man convicted of being disguised for a felonious purpose, even if that purpose were not effected, was liable to imprisonment for from two to three years, and that for destruction of property such as had been wrought it would mean transportation for a good slice out of a lifetime.

The constable was uneasy. He was on familiar terms with everyone in St. David's, and desired to remain with those terms of mutual goodwill undisturbed. He was, however, galled at the remarks passed on him, and uncomfortable at the thought of strange officers coming into the place and doing that which he had shown his incapacity or unwillingness to effect.

The relatives of Lewis Rees and Henry Owen, well-to-do people in St. David's, the one the son of a small yeoman, the other of the principal grocer, were incensed at the youths' not being discharged, though no proof of participation in the riot had been produced.

And the people generally were in a high condition of excitability and alarm. They knew quite well who had been the Rebecca rioters; some belonged to the labouring class, and others were far above them in social position. The reward of a hundred pounds for

each conviction was tempting to a poor man. Would every one of them resist it?

Those who were supposed to be liable to be affected by the offer were now subjected to a good deal of attention. They received presents of fowls, rabbits, butter. Packets of tobacco were thrust into their hands, and they were recipients of profuse offers of a glass at the tavern. Hints were thrown out that if they held their tongues they would never want friends in Dewisland; but that should they yield to temptation they would be hounded out of the place. And it was deemed expedient to let them see to what lengths popular resentment would go.

The people of St. David's hung together like a swarm of bees. Touch one, touch all. Living in an extreme corner of Britain, all the families were related in some way, some nearly. A good many suspected that John Evans the younger was not in Merioneth at all, but in Ramsey, but not one of them gave utterance to the suspicion. All felt that he had done the right thing in going out of the way. But strong feeling was growing against Sheena Lewis. Some ten miles intervened between St. David's and Mathry, where was held the petty sessions, and in ten miles a story rolls over and over and gets greatly altered. It was

said that her evidence alone had prevented Lewis Rees from being discharged. It was hinted that she had a good deal more to say, which she reserved till certain others had been arrested. It was known that she had conveyed the letter from Peter Sturgis to Sir John Pryce. She had done it unsuspiciously, little knowing what its contents were, at Peter's request, when she went to Lady Pryce to beg scraps of silk. And because on the following day she had gone on foot into Haverford, the people of St. David's were convinced that she had conveyed the message summoning the military.

Mrs. O'Grady felt that public feeling was adverse when she went into town to do some shopping. She could get no one to serve her. At night the windows of her cottage were broken. She applied to the carpenter-plumber to mend them. He had not the requisite glass, nor time at his disposal.

St. David's had resolved to make of Mrs. O'Grady and Sheena a deterrent example to informers.

CHAPTER XXIV

JOHN EVANS was on Ramsey with no occupation on his hands. All repairs had been done; and in winter on that island there was little agriculture.

He took to the boat in all conditions of tide and in every sort of weather.

He made the circuit of the island. He skirted the western precipices, gnawed into by, yet standing defiant against, the Atlantic surges. The great heart of the ocean beat against that wall of iron, as does that of humanity against the hard, remorseless face of modern civilisation, and left it unshaken. He paddled into the bays, and cast himself down in the boat rising and falling with the swell to listen to the scream of the gulls, and to look at the puffins like chains of white beads on the ledges. He dared to penetrate into those two awful tunnels, each five hundred feet long, that pierce the headlands, and where the sea pursues its stubborn resolve in time to break them off and convert them into islets. He drifted

across Aber Mawr, the great bite taken out of the island by the hungry ocean, having done which it falls into despair and fails to gain any further advantage. Or else he committed himself to the race in the channel, and was swept through this way by the rising, that way by the falling, tide. He allowed himself in his boat to be carried into the swirl about the "Horse," or to be spun in the eddies at the point of the "Bitches." He was indifferent whether he were dashed against the fangs of rock or sucked down in the bottle-green whirlpool. Only mechanically did he bend to his oars to rescue himself when in immediate peril of destruction.

From one of these expeditions he returned to the farm, wet to the skin, silent, listless, and seated himself by the fire.

Rob Roberts smoked and contemplated him, and saw that youth was draining out of the man, leaving only drops of existence behind.

Then he took the pipe out of his mouth, and said, "See now, Shone. If I were sent here to be your nurse, and the duty was laid on me to look after you, instead of you being sent here to spy on and report on me, I'd put a stop to this. You may throw away your life if you will; that is no concern of mine, I am not responsible for it. But I am not going to

allow the boat to be knocked to pieces, for I have had that committed to my care, and what is more, if you lose that, how am I to get over to St. David's for a pound of 'baccy? That boat could not be replaced under a ten-pound note. And you have no right to throw away your father's money, and to inconvenience me beside. If things are not going with you as you like, face it as a man. I've had enough of ill in my day, but I haven't given in."

"You are right, Rob," answered John. "I'll go out no more in the boat for distraction."

He kept his word, and occupied himself with digging a channel so as to drain a marsh. Oh! if he could but let off the bitterness that filled his heart as he released the stagnant, festering water from the morass!

But restlessness overcame him. He must venture once more to the mainland to learn how his brother progressed. Accordingly one afternoon he crossed to Porth Stinian, and ascended the rugged path to Rhoson.

When he reached the farm, he walked forward a few paces, as he saw in the lane a figure which he took to be that of Sheena, standing by the wall, with her arms and head leaning on a bundle. She did not hear him as he approached, and he heard that she was sobbing.

Then, with firm tread and set lips, he strode towards her, and said: "What is the matter? Why are you crying?"

She started at his voice, shrank away, and looked at him in terror.

"What is the meaning of this?" he inquired. "Is my brother worse?"

"No—no!" she stammered. "He is better; he has gone out to-day."

"Then why do you cry?"

She caught up her bundle and pressed it to her bosom.

"I cannot tell you all. We have our peck of troubles. So has everyone."

"Everyone but myself," said John. "I am happy. I am going to be married to the handsomest girl in Dewisland. I am happy as a bird. What ails you? Are you ill?"

"No."

"You have had too much watching. It has broken down your nerve. But now that Davie is better you will not have so much required of you."

Sheena, ill restraining her sobs, said: "I have not watched at night lately. Mrs. Thomas has gone, and Mr. Evans has made me do her work in the kitchen. But now I am leaving Rhoson. Mr. Evans will not keep me there any more because the people are set

against me, and think that I brought the soldiers on them."

"What nonsense!"

"They do think it, and I did take the letter from Peter Sturgis to Sir John Pryce, but I did not know what it was about. Your father feels that the people are set against me, and has told me to go."

"Has he paid you for your services?"

"Yes."

"Then you have no occasion to cry. Go home."

He turned back to the house. He had used much self-control, and had spoken harshly. He went to Rhoson with hands clenched, and a furrow in his brow.

When he entered the house he started with surprise. In the room stood his father, rigged out in light trousers, wearing a figured waistcoat, and on his back was a green cloth coat with brass buttons. Before him in a gesture of admiration stood the local tailor. Mr. Evans was twisting and turning himself about.

"I shall want a white neck-cloth," said he. "Does the coat fit behind? I cannot get my head round so as to see my back. Ah, Shone! you are arrived at the right time. The tailor declares that this is a perfect fit, but it is part of his profession to cry up his own handiwork.

Tell me, are there creases from under the arms? Do the buttons sit correctly at the small?"

Shone could hardly credit his eyes. His father! so frugal, so sparing of expense in everything concerning his dress, inclined to shabbiness—to blaze forth suddenly in this gallantry! What did it mean? He was speechless with astonishment.

The old man screwed up his eyes to look at him, stroked down his waistcoat, and stretched his limbs.

"James Morgan," said he to the tailor, "I don't call these calves shrunken. Oblige me by putting that form across the room. I will jump it, and show you that I am still as nimble as a kid."

"I think you had better not risk a trip and fall, sir."

"Trip and fall!" echoed old John; "I shall not trip and fall."

"Sir, allow me to observe that you would strain the garments and take from them their newness of shape."

"There is something in that," acquiesced the farmer; "I hate to see trousers baggy at the knee."

"Father, what is the meaning of this?" asked his son, at last finding his voice.

"I have no time to talk to you now, boy.

Go to Ty Gwyn; there they will tell you what the meaning is."

"But, father, if this be intended as a preparation for my wedding, it is premature; I shall not be married for some months."

The old man laughed.

"Take care, sir," said the tailor; "you will establish creases in your waistcoat."

"Go along, go along to Ty Gwyn," said Mr. Evans; "I do not want you here now. I am engaged with Mr. Morgan."

John Evans the younger started for the house of his intended, very greatly perplexed in mind, and seeking the solution of the puzzle there.

On reaching the house he walked in unceremoniously, and found Mrs. Bowen and her daughter seated by a table heaped with linen flummery. The mother was busily plying her needle, but the daughter was sitting inactive, flushed, and with tears in her eyes.

When John entered, and she saw him, she sharply turned her chair about so as to present her back to him, and said not a word of salutation.

Mrs. Bowen was also mute, and looked at Shone with a hard, unwelcoming eye.

"Dinah," said John, "this is unkind treatment when I have been away so long."

She made no answer.

"Why do you behave towards me so cruelly?" he asked.

"Is it for you to put this question," retorted the mother, "when you have conducted yourself so ill to her?"

"I? What have I done?"

"What have you not done?" exclaimed Mrs. Bowen. "You—who were engaged to my daughter!"

"I am engaged to her still."

"Indeed, no. She repudiates you."

"Dinah!"

"I will have nothing to say to you," exclaimed the girl, looking over her shoulder. She had dried her eyes, and a glitter of resentment was in them.

"Shilly-shallying with her. Playing fast and loose. A daughter of mine, who will inherit Ty Gwyn, is not to be treated like that," pursued the mother, tossing her chin.

"I have not done so," replied John.

"What else do you call putting off the marriage for months?"

"I gave good reasons for it, reasons sufficient to satisfy anyone with common sense," retorted John indignantly.

"Empty excuses!"

Then the woman's eyes contracted, and her face became hard as though cut out of stone,

as she added: "That is not everything. It has come out that all the while you have been courting Dinah you have been carrying on a low intrigue with a common slut."

"What slut?" asked John, becoming rigid in turn.

"What slut? As if you did not know!"

"I entirely deny the imputation."

"You have been frequenting the cottage on Dowrog Waun."

"That is not true. I have been there once or twice—yes—twice in all."

"Oh yes! to invite that half-Irish girl over to your house."

"I suppose you mean that I asked Sheena to nurse poor Davie. I did no such thing. I left Rhoson as she entered it."

"And you have returned again and again from your Merionethshire journey after sheep to have a pleasant chat with this poor innocent lamb!"

"I have been back once, to see Davie." Then he went up to Dinah, laid his hands on the back of her chair, and twisted it round. "Di, I insist on an explanation. I have been true to you in word and in deed. I intend to be true to you. I have given you no occasion to doubt it. Answer me. Do you hold to the engagement? Yes or no?"

"You must not talk to her like that," said Mrs. Bowen, with a tone of triumph in her voice; "she belongs to you no more. All is up between you, and she has accepted another."

"Another!—whom, then?"

"Your father."

John reeled back.

"It is so," said Mrs. Bowen. "He is weary of his housekeepers, and he is justly indignant at the way in which you have behaved to my daughter. He wants a wife who will look after the farm and see that the servants do their work, and he has very wisely chosen Dinah."

John stood for a moment bewildered. But only for a moment, and then he burst into a roar of laughter, and laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks. It was not polite, and it made both the mother and daughter furious. But the situation was so absurd. His father fitting on his wedding dress rose as a picture before his eyes. And the sudden consciousness that he was free—free from the tie that had dragged him into the dust—caused such a revulsion of feeling that he could not do other than laugh.

He said no word, but hastily left the house, and continued laughing all the way down the lane.

As he mounted the hill beyond the stream, and approached Ffynnon Vaidoc, Martha, the servant girl at Ty Gwyn, was descending, burdened with a basket. She had been into the town making purchases for the house.

When she caught sight of Shone Evans she halted, awaiting him, and, as he was about to proceed on his way without noticing her, she planted the basket before him and said: "Well, now, I do not call that civil to go by me without a word."

"You must pardon me, Martha," replied John, stopping and recognising her. "My head was so full of my own concerns that I actually did not see you."

"Oh! your own affairs are enough, Shone Evans, to occupy you—I allow that. You have had the sack given you at our place."

"You seem to know what goes on there, Martha."

"Ay, I know a great deal more of what goes on there, and has been going on there for some time, Shone, than you suppose, or Miss Di either."

"That is like enough," said John indifferently. "Now, kindly allow me to go on my way."

"No," replied Martha; "I have not told you why I stayed you."

"Well, say on."

"In the first place, I wish you joy of your luck. You are well out of this engagement."

John said nothing.

"I know that she has thrown you over to take your father. She never cared for you. Her fancy lay in another direction. I shall believe that she marries the old man only when I see him put the ring on her finger."

"Now I may proceed?"

"Not yet. There is something more I have to say, and that concerns Mrs. O'Grady and Sheena Lewis."

"What of them?" asked Shone, suddenly interested.

"They have been at Rhoson nursing Mr. David, and I say that it is a shame they should be treated as they are."

"What do you mean, Martha?"

"The people have broken their windows, and have thrown away all their pile of turf, and have cast down the wall of their cabbage plot, and now they are going to drive them out of Dewisland."

"Good heavens! what do you say?"

"I say what is true. They are going to tear the roof off the cottage, and force them to quit the country."

"They are!—when?"

"To-night."

"Martha, this cannot be."

"It will be. They are mustering now."

"Let me pass!"

Martha removed the obstruction.

John stood for a moment in doubt whether to go at once to the cottage on the Waun or to go to Rhoson. After a moment's consideration he chose the latter course.

CHAPTER XXV

WHEN John Evans arrived at Rhoson he found his father out of his new suit, back in his shabby everyday dress, seated by the fire, so close that he had taken the shovel to screen his face from the glow, and with it occasionally to fan himself. His long, thin legs were extended before him, and a complacent smile was on his face.

Directly that his son entered the room he burst into a series of chuckles, and fanned himself vigorously.

"So, you have learned your happiness, Shone!" said he; "going to have a new mother, eh! No more housekeepers to bother the life out of one tired of them. I want a young thing like wax whom I can mould. You pert cockerels, just hatched, and with some of the shell sticking to your backs, think that you can strut and crow on the dunghill, but we older birds can outcrow and outstrut you, and maintain our place."

"I wish you all joy and success, father. Dinah never cared for me."

"Who would have the cockboat when the ship is available?"

"Well, father, I am content. As you have made your choice, I trust that you will allow me to make mine."

"Do as you like. I have cut you out, Shone, and you must look elsewhere."

"But now, something other concerns me. I hear that the lads of St. David's are going to pull down the house of Mrs. O'Grady and her granddaughter, because they have taken up the absurd notion that Sheena brought the military upon them."

"What have we to do with that—you or I?"

"They will be driven out of their home."

"Well, they must find a shake-down somewhere else."

"That will not do. After the goodness Sheena has shown to Davie, it must not be allowed."

"I have paid her, and paid her well."

"But the debt is not fully discharged, to my mind. Where is Davie now?"

The old man flicked the shovel about impatiently.

"Davie! Gone, I suppose, to the O'Grady cottage to scrape on his fiddle. He has been away half the afternoon."

"I ask a great favour of you, father, and I think that you owe me something. Let me bring the widow and Sheena here."

"No, no," retorted the old man; "I packed Sheena off because I did not wish to go against the feeling in the place, and I can't harbour those whom Dewisland regards as wolves."

"Consider, father. You have no one to attend to your comforts. Prudence is incapable as a cook; besides, she has the dairy to attend to. It will not do for your liver to be put out of order before the wedding-day."

John saw that the farmer was in a good humour, so he pressed his petition. "I really do think that some compensation is owing to me. You have snapped the bite out of my mouth in a most astonishing manner, that shows how nimble you are with your legs and wits, and what a set of teeth you have. But here am I, left plundered and famished. Really, father, you must grant me my petition, just to salve over my raw hide."

"As you will, then," replied old John, going off into another fit of laughter. "It's a bitter bite for you to mumble, Shone, but I must say you do not make a wry face over it. Well, well, let it be so; when I come to think of it, we must have things got into order here before the great day. There are sheets and table-

cloths to be hemmed and mended. But if I consent to this, it is on a condition: that you get paint and a brush, and dab over the windows and doors, so that all may be spick and span, and I may be saved the expense of getting it done by Ezekiel, the painter."

"Gladly," said John, and he left the room and ran.

Night had set in, a night under a star sprinkled firmament, with a cold east wind whistling over the wold and among the rocks, hissing in the thorn bushes, piping in the coarse grass about the marsh of Pwll Trefeithan.

John had cut short his interview with his father, as he knew that time pressed, and he feared lest he should be too late, lest he should find the lads already engaged on their cruel work, lest the poor women should already be cowering in the ruins of their home, or be flying over the moor before a yelping pack of pursuers, not knowing whither to fly, nor where to find a place of refuge. He ran; his breath came fast, his heart beat furiously, but he did not for a moment slacken his pace. Where the roadway swerved between walls, there he leaped them, so as to take a direct course.

The distance he had to cover was about two miles. He gained nothing by crossing country

as the crow flies, for he stumbled over ploughed glebe, he fell in clambering over a wall, he tore his hands among briars; but he went on, running, picking himself up when he fell, running again, till he reached the open moor, and saw, dark against the sky, the outline of the cottage.

A feeble light shone through the crevices of the boards which had been set against the windows where the glass was shattered, with the purpose of excluding the cold.

John was too much out of breath to speak. He struck the door, and found it barred; in his impatience he put his shoulder to it.

Hark! he heard voices, doubtless those of the band on its way to tear the roof off the cottage. They were still distant.

Again he flung himself against the door; it yielded, and he with it came into the room.

Mrs. O'Grady had been bending over the cauldron that was slung above the peat fire when she heard the first stroke. Sheena, fearing violence, threw herself between her grandmother and the entrance. The old woman reared herself, and stood holding a long fork in her hand.

Then came the second blow, followed by the falling in of the door, and John dashed in upon the floor.

"Quick! quick!" he gasped; "come at once!"

He laid hold of the girl's hand to drag her forth.

"Shone!" she exclaimed, and wrenched herself from his hold. His appearance was wild, his hair flying about his heated face. The manner in which he had entered was alarming.

"Come on! There is no time to be lost!" he shouted.

But the girl shrank from him.

The old woman remained in the same attitude, but scratched her nose with the fork. When, however, she saw her granddaughter shivering with terror, and the young man pressing forward to seize her, she asked: "Sure, what is it you've got into your head now, Mr. Shone? 'Ave you any sense of dacency lift in ye at all at all?"

John could only pant, "There is no time to be wasted. Where is Davie?"

"Is it Davie, then, you want? He's gone, he is, to Mr. Ezekiel Pugh, the carpenter, to beg a bit of glass for the windows, and a dab of putty as well."

"The windows!" exclaimed John; "to mend the windows, when the whole house is about to be plucked down! Come on, Sheena."

She placed her hands behind her back.

"Sheena, you must leave this, you and your grandmother. They are coming!—I heard them on the way—the Rebeccaites. I will take you to Rhoson; father consents. Come, come at once."

He caught the girl again, and as she still resisted, his anger flared up. "I tell you," he urged, "that not a moment must be cast away. I have but just heard what was purposed. Do you want the whole rabble to be on you?"

As he dragged the girl to him, she wrenched herself away.

"I will not go without my granny!"

"Then, in Heaven's name!" He darted towards the old woman.

"Och!" she exclaimed, "but it's the illigant bit of bacon I'm sorrowing for."

"Confound the bacon!" said he; "you will lose everything."

"And there's the silks and the sathins, and the unfinished quilt——!"

She could not conclude the lament. He took her up in his arms, still brandishing or gesticulating with the fork, and plunged out of the door with her. Then Sheena followed.

The Rebeccaites were approaching. They were on the Waun, moving along, without lights, as a black shadow on the frosted ground.

John dashed along the road in the opposite direction.

"Sheena, open the gate into the field on the left," he ordered, and she obeyed. He ran through with his burden. He did not speak till he had crossed the field. Then he ordered: "Pull down some of the stones from the wall!" and Sheena did as commanded. He lifted the old woman over.

When they had reached the limit of the second field and were at a considerable distance from the Waun, John set the grandmother upon her feet.

"There is a gate beyond," said he, "and then we shall be out in the lane. I will see you both to Rhoson and then return and save all I can."

"Och, but the bit o' bacon!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Grady. "Them rascally boys will ate it, and bedad, I hope it may choke them entirely."

But now Shone had no further thought for the old woman. He turned to the girl and extended his arms. All the pent-up love against which he had struggled so long broke forth.

"My darling! my only darling, come to my arms!"

And he caught her to him.

"Shone! oh, Shone! you forget—there is Dinah!"

"Dinah!" laughed he. "Dinah! she has cast me off and there is naught between us any more. You, you only do I love, you alone have I loved, and you only will I have. I have loved you, and been mad through it, ever since I held you in my arms to save you from Tarw."

He held her to his heart, and covered her face with kisses, and she burst into one great sob in which all her past sorrow escaped, and she clung to him as one drowning to a rock.

In the distance broke out shouts. The rioters had reached the cottage and had found it deserted.

But John and Sheena heard no sound; they were in a trance of delight. The nightmare that had oppressed Shone for so long was removed; he could now clasp to his heart, without self-reproach, the one girl whom he had loved.

"Oh, Sheena!" he asked in a whisper, "have you ever cared for me?"

"Shone, dear Shone! I never cared for any other—but I dared not think of you, because you belonged——"

"Do not name her."

And again he covered her with kisses.

"Bedad," said the old woman, seating herself on a stone from the wall, "sure it's just me and Tim over again, as it was fifty years agone. But is it going to Rhoson we are, and me hair all dishivelled? I must tidy it a bit," and she proceeded to adjust and comb her scanty locks with the kitchen fork.

"Och!" said Mrs. O'Grady, "and it was just the honey he sipped off me lips thin—I mane Tim."

"But," said Sheena, disengaging herself from Shone's clasp, "how is it—about Dinah? Has she really—how could she cast you off?"

"She has done so, for another."

"Another?"

"Yes, my father."

"Your father?"

"She is about to become my mother."

Then Shone and Sheena and Mrs. O'Grady —who was recalled from her sentimental reminiscences—broke out into laughter, and whilst the Rebecca rabble was engaged in demolishing the poor little cottage on the Waun, these three laughed, and cried, and laughed again; and two of them only ceased laughing by sealing up each other's lips with kisses. Then Shone slipped on to the girl's finger the ring he had found on Ramsey.

CHAPTER XXVI

"I THINK," said John, "that if you two could find your way to Rhoson without me, I would return to the Waun and do all in my power to prevent damage being done to the house. Even if I am seen, no one who sees me there will be in the least likely to betray the fact that I am in Dewisland, for I take it that those who are at your cottage are all more or less implicated in the Rebecca riots. But I might frighten them into leaving your cottage and goods alone if I threaten to return before next petty sessions and let them take the consequences. You may rely on it my father expects to see you. Say that I have sent you on, and will follow."

"If ye can but save me bacon," urged Mrs. O'Grady, "it's I that will bless ye to my dying day. And ye'll mind the scraps of sathin and silk and chintz, ye will now."

John accordingly led the old woman and her granddaughter into the lane, and gave them injunctions how to explain to his father that

he sent them, relying on his promise, and to help get all the linen of the house into thorough order before the wedding.

When he was out of sight, "Bedad," said the old woman, "it's not going on to Rhoson I am widout him. And it's about my house and the bacon I'm concerned. Sheena, it's going back Oi be, behind the wall, just to look on and see what comes of it all. And it's myself as thinks they're mighty quiet over it. If them was Oirish boys, there'd be some hollering."

John hastened along the lane, contented to think that the two women were on their way to Rhoson. The easiest course would have been for them to go through the town, but for obvious reasons Shone had not taken them that way, but so that they could strike a bit of moor to a farm, and thence into the road, avoiding the town entirely.

When he came out on the moor, and approached the cottage, he was surprised to find parties of those who had gone thither with the purpose of wrecking it retiring quietly. About the house was no gathering of wild spirits, no destruction was in progress; and he thrust himself through those who encumbered the doorway and entered the house. What he saw there was the last thing he had anticipated.

A number of young men were standing silent and awed, clustered about a recumbent form on the floor. John tore his way between them, and fell on his knee beside Davie, from whose lips a stream of blood was flowing.

Then, and only by snatches, did he learn what had taken place.

The Rebecca boys, but without disguise, had proceeded to the cottage of Mrs. O'Grady with purpose to unroof it, and drive its occupants out of Dewisland. They had found the door broken in, and had entered. They had begun the process of demolition, when David Narberth, who had been in St. David's, having learned what was proposed, had run after the band, and reached the cottage just as they had begun to wreck it.

A fury had come over him, he had fought, using his strong arms like flails, beating his way among the lads, defying them, striking down those who touched the property of the widow and her granddaughter, had stormed, and then—had suddenly collapsed, with a burst of blood from his lips. The wound dealt him had not been completely healed. The agitation and the exercise had burst the film that separated it from the lungs.

In the deepest distress Shone knelt beside his half-brother, whose eyes met his and smiled.

Davie attempted to speak, but Shone would not let him.

He inquired if a doctor had been sent for, and was told that one of the lads had run at once to summon Dr. Jones.

Nothing could be done but wait. None spoke; those present were awed by the prospect of death, for that there was little or no hope of recovery was obvious.

"Is there anything you would wish, dear Davie?" asked Shone.

The deformed lad nodded, and pointed to where his violin hung against the wall.

"Is it that you want?"

A nod in reply.

One of those present took down the bag, and brought the instrument out of it.

"Let me play it once more," spoke Davie. "Raise me, Shone."

John lifted his brother in his arms, and the dying man, with a flash of light in his face, grasped the cherished violin and put it under his chin.

Then he drew the bow across the strings, and began "Ar hyd y nos!"

"Sweet the tale of minstrel merry,
Ar hyd y nos!
Sweet the rest of herdsman weary,
Ar hyd y nos!

And to hearts oppressed with sorrow,
Forced the mask of mirth to borrow,
Comfort comes until the morrow,
Ar hyd y nos!"

As he played, in through the door came Mrs. O'Grady and Sheena, and the eyes of Davie were kindled at the sight of the latter.

"Oh, Davie! Davie!" cried the girl, and ran to him and stooped over him, kneeling on one knee.

Noticing how quiet all was about the cottage, Mrs. O'Grady had ventured into the road, and she and her granddaughter had learned from those who stood without, conversing in low tones, what had happened, and how matters stood within.

Shone took Sheena's hand and said, "Sheena, give my brother a kiss. It will comfort him."

She bent and pressed her lips to his brow, and her tears dropped on his cheek.

Davie looked inquiringly from Shone to Sheena, and there was a twitch as of pain in his face, but it yielded, and he whispered, "Tell me; I do not understand."

And yet he divined something.

With an effort he raised himself into a sitting posture, and looked at Sheena with wondering eyes.

"Tell me, what is it?"

Then John stooped to his ear and whispered, "Davie, she is mine. It is all over with Dinah."

His chalk-white face became momentarily whiter, and his mouth quivered.

But that passed, and he smiled.

"Ah! right, right it is, she would never have had me. I am glad, Shone, glad—you will take care of her."

And again he raised his fiddle to his chin, and began, "Ar hyd y nos!"

But his strength failed, and he could not finish the strain—

> "Comfort comes until the morrow,
> Ar hyd y nos!"

The instrument sank with his hands, and John quietly laid his half-brother on the floor; his eyes were still open, and looked from Shone to Sheena, his breath came short, and drops of blood formed on his lips. But an expression of happiness was on his face.

Then in at the door came Dr. Jones, much flurried, shouting for John Evans.

Shone held up his hand and signed to his brother, and those standing round parted and made way for the surgeon.

He looked at the patient, and shook his head.

"John," said he, "you must leave him a moment and come outside with me."

"I cannot," replied Shone. "Do you not see?"

"You must. I have something very important to say—this is not all. There is a load of troubles come on you at once."

John looked doubtfully at David, who nodded, as much as to say, "Leave me awhile."

"I will remain by him," said Sheena. "But return quickly."

"Can he be moved?" asked Shone, as he went to the door with the medical man.

"Impossible. There are not many more minutes that he can live."

"Then quick out with your tidings. Nothing can be worse than this."

"It is bad news. Be prepared for it."

"Well, say it. It must go back to Davie."

"Shone"—the doctor was looking very grave—he drew the young man outside the door by the lappel of his coat. "Shone—there is something that has occurred at Rhoson."

"Well—what?" asked John impatiently.

"It seems that your father was going to be married to Dinah Bowen—we thought it was you she was to take."

"I know it. Is that all?"

"It is not all by any means. Tidings have just reached him that Dinah has run away with Nathan Groes, the farm labourer."

"Run away!"

"It is so. She managed to get hold of her mother's savings-box with a good deal of money in it, and has eloped with that scoundrel."

"My father is well out of that business."

"And you too—but there is worse behind. When the news reached Rhoson, your father flew into a towering rage, and fell down in an apoplectic fit. I have been there—I was summoned, and found him speechless. I do not think he will live."

"Good heavens!"

"I am sorry to have to bring such tidings—and now—when this other affliction is on you."

"And is there no hope for Davie?"

"None."

Without another word John returned, stunned by what he had heard, and saw Davie lying, with his hand in that of Sheena and his eyes on her face. The deformed lad's lips moved.

"Is it something you wish to say?" asked Shone, stooping low over the prostrate man.

He put his ear near to his mouth, and heard him whisper, "Ar hyd y nos."

And they were the last words he uttered.

Again Shone Evans disappeared from St. David's. He was present at the funeral of his father and his brother, that took place on the same day, at the same hour; and immediately after the conclusion of the double burial he was gone again.

Great was the wrath of Mrs. Bowen at the duplicity and the dishonesty of Dinah. She vowed that never should the girl cross her threshold again, and that instead of making her heir to Ty Gwyn she would leave the farm to a cousin.

The next petty sessions at Mathry failed to produce convictions, as had the former. Lewis Rees and Henry Owen were then discharged, as no evidence was forthcoming that would justify their being sent to the assizes for trial.

The parish of St. David's had to rebuild or repair the demolished or injured turnpikes, and considered itself fortunate in escaping so easily. Everyone but Sir John Pryce was content with the result. This magistrate fumed and swore, for he knew that he had made himself ridiculous.

Later, when the assizes were over, John Evans reappeared, and had to bear the brunt of much chaffing from the folk at St. David's relative to his supposed trip to Machynlleth. But everyone was pleased with him for having

remained so long in concealment. It was felt that by so doing Dewisland had been saved from a disgrace that would long have clung to it, and the families in the place from having relatives in involuntary banishment to Botany Bay.

And when it was known that Shone Evans was about to marry Sheena Lewis, though the people thought he might have done better for himself, no one was disposed to say a hard word against him for his choice.

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BYZANTINE TEXTS,	25
CHURCHMAN'S BIBLE,	25
CHURCHMAN'S LIBRARY,	25
CLASSICAL TRANSLATIONS,	25
COMMERCIAL SERIES,	26
CONNOISSEURS LIBRARY,	26
LIBRARY OF DEVOTION,	26
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JUNIOR EXAMINATION SERIES,	28
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